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MEMOIR

OF

EMILY ELIZABETH PARSONS

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EMILY ELIZABETH PARSONS.

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NOTE.

During the late war, my daughter served in the military hospitals of Fort Schuyler in New York; Lawson Hospital in St. Louis; on a hospital steamer on the Mississippi, from St. Louis to Vicksburg; and in Benton Barracks Hospital in St. Louis,—from October, 1862, to August, 1864. This Memoir consists mainly of letters which she wrote from those places. It was prepared only for private distribution among her friends, with no intention of sale or publication. But the letters contain many details of hospital life, and of incidents of the war connected with them; and they who have read them think the book may have some interest beyond that which arises from a personal regard for the writer of the letters. An earnest effort is about to be made to establish, upon a permanent foundation, the Cambridge Hospital, instituted by her in 1867; and I have been urged, by those whose opinions I am bound to respect, and who are foremost in that effort, to permit the publication of the book for the benefit of the Hospital.

THEOPHILUS PARSONS.

MEMOIR

OF

EMILY ELIZABETH PARSONS.

NOTHING could be farther from the wishes, the tastes or habits of my daughter Emily, than an effort to magnify the events of her life into undue importance, or to found upon them claims for unusual regard. But she had some peculiar traits of character, and some unusual opportunities for usefulness, in connection with the civil war, of which this brief and simple record may be interesting to the friends for whom alone it is intended.

She was born March 8, 1824, and died May 19, 1880.

From her childhood she manifested more than common energy, and a disposition to earnest and persistent activity. But this natural tendency was combated and suppressed, to a large extent, by

many physical hindrances. These were so oppressive that they who knew best what she did, and under what disadvantages she labored, could not but be surprised that she was able to accomplish so much. But she never seemed to yield to dispiriting circumstances; or, indeed, to obstacles which it was possible to overcome.

When about five years old she ran a sharp pair of scissors into the pupil of her right eye. The wound soon healed, but the iris and the lenses were badly torn, and the eye, though not much disfigured, was so much injured that she was entirely unable to make any use of it. A sympathy with the wounded eye, or, perhaps, the extra work thrown upon the other eye, weakened it, so that she never had that unimpeded sight that they have who possess healthy organs.

When seven years old, she was extremely ill with scarlet-fever. The disease left her totally deaf. From this she gradually recovered, and in adult life was able to hear whatever was distinctly addressed to her, but could not join freely in general conversation.

When about twenty-five years old, she injured an ankle very severely, breaking some of the cords. It was exceedingly painful, and for some

time she made no use of her foot. It gradually grew better, but never entirely well; and she was under medical treatment for it at brief intervals during her life. She could and did walk a great deal, seldom complaining, although the pain and weakness sometimes compelled entire rest. But she suffered much from lameness, and when obliged to stand or walk for a long time continuously, the pain compelled a temporary abstinence from all use of the foot. But as long as it was possible to discharge her duties, she did so, regardless of the suffering, and yielding to it only upon strict compulsion.

None of these hindrances, nor all of them together, prevented her from doing all in her power to relieve the suffering of any whom she could reach. This seemed to be her prevailing purpose. She had only the opportunities which offer themselves to unmarried women who seek for them, until in 1861 the war of the Rebellion broke out. She at once declared her desire to enlist in the army as a nurse. I confess that I yielded to her wishes with great reluctance; for it seemed to me that her blindness, deafness and lameness, offered obstacles to her usefulness as a hospital nurse which could not be overcome. But her wishes were too

strong to be resisted. She knew the difficulties under which she labored, but earnestly desired to make the effort and do as much as she could. She was advised by those who knew, that there was an abundance of willing but uninstructed service of this kind offering; and she attended the Massachusetts Hospital, in Boston, as a volunteer nurse, sleeping at home, but passing her days in the hospital. There she was kindly received by the whole medical staff, and carefully instructed in such work as might be required of her in the duty she proposed to undertake. She remained more than a year, — until she was assured that she was entirely competent to do useful work as a nurse in a military hospital. Then she volunteered in that capacity.

She was at once appointed to the hospital at Fort Schuyler, near New York, and left home for that hospital Oct. 15, 1862. Under the labor and exposure of the post, her health broke down, and in the beginning of 1863 she went to New York, visiting a friend. In a few weeks she was summoned, somewhat urgently, to St. Louis. Without any delay, she went at once from New York to St. Louis, and reached that city on Jan. 26, 1863. The hospital there, called

the Lawson Hospital, was one of the largest military hospitals in the country. She was at once appointed a nurse in that hospital. Here she remained but a few weeks, when she was asked to take charge of the nursing department on board a large steamer, which was to go down the Mississippi to bring up the sick and wounded to the hospitals. On February 12, 1863, she started down the river, and went as far as Vicksburg, where the conflict was then going on. She returned in about a month to St. Louis. There she was at once attacked by malarial fever, contracted on the river. She was quite ill for a considerable time, and her letters, when she was able to write, bear the strongest testimony to the exceeding kindness and tenderness with which she was treated at the house of a stranger who had become a friend.

When she recovered her health, she was assigned to the great hospital in St. Louis, called the Benton Barracks Hospital, and was placed at once in charge of the whole nursing department of this hospital, which was prepared at first for two thousand patients, and later, for twenty-five hundred.

I was then, and am now, wholly unable to account for this. I can explain it only on the sup-

position that, at the breaking out of the war, this country had no experience which prepared our citizens for the work of war. Multitudes of important and arduous offices, both in the army and out of it, were to be filled; and they who had the appointing power could only make the best use they could of the material offered them, and judge of it as well as they could by the evidence they had. Some of these appointments were successful, and others were not. It will be my effort to exhibit, mainly from my daughter's letters, what duties were assigned to her, and in what way she discharged them.

She remained in that post until late in 1863, when she was again attacked with malarial fever, and was so ill that it was thought necessary for her to return home. She came home, recovered her health, and in March, 1864, returned to St. Louis. She resumed her post in the hospital, and remained there until late in the autumn of that year, when she was again attacked with malarial disease, and finally returned home.

During the years she passed in St. Louis, her family received many letters from her. In the midst of her work it seemed to comfort her to communicate with her distant home, which she had

never left before. I have found it very difficult to choose such parts of these letters as it would be well to print. Of course, of some of them the whole, and of all a large part, relate to family and home matters, which there is no reason for printing. I am very doubtful whether the selection I have made is a wise one. To me they are all interesting; but I cannot expect them to be so to others. I have been guided in my final choice by what I have already said is the purpose of this sketch. That is, I have selected only parts of such letters as seem to me to exhibit the work she did, and the manner in which she did it. What I print, I print just as it was written, for I wished it to remain obvious that these letters were written without the slightest thought of their ever meeting other eyes than those for which they were written.

I have omitted nothing more unwillingly than the letters in which she often expresses her grateful acknowledgment, not merely of the universal kindness she met with from all with whom she had any relations in St. Louis, but of the tender and constant care bestowed upon her, when she most needed it, by those who took her, a stranger, to their homes when sick, and made her feel indeed at home there. Gentlemen like Mr. Yeatman, so

well known through the country for his services in the Sanitary Commission, and Mr. Hasard, the President of that Commission, under whose direction she was, and whom she was constantly meeting, held it to be their duty to take good care of her. Not content with this, they spared no opportunities of manifesting the most constant, careful, and considerate attention to everything which could conduce to her comfort, — and, indeed, to all her wants and wishes.

I have already mentioned some of the obstacles to my daughter's usefulness. She had, however, two characteristics which must have been helpful. One was great fearlessness. Very seldom did I know her to manifest fear of anything. This must have made it easier for her to encounter some of the risks to which she was called upon to expose herself. Another useful quality was the entire absence of what is called nervousness. There are ladies who shrink from the sight of blood, and some who faint at even hearing of it. So far as I know, my daughter had no weakness of this kind, but faced at once wounds however ghastly, or assisted at surgical operations, without shrinking or tremor, and was never disturbed by the sight of death.

On the whole, I should infer from her letters that she was successful in her work. But I have other evidence of this, of a kind which may be more satisfactory. Miss Sophia Knight, of Boston, a friend of my daughter, and a most intelligent lady, requested of her an opportunity to be of service, and joined her at Benton Barracks, and was there for some six months in 1864. In a letter to me she says, —

"In speaking with me of your daughter, which he often did, Dr. Russell expressed very full appreciation of the rare combination of zeal and executive ability which she evinced throughout her services in the large hospital, of which he was surgeon in charge. Her self-forgetfulness and watchfulness, her readiness in emergencies, her successful accomplishment of wise and useful plans, also the promptness of her measures against anything leading toward disorder, seemed wonderful to him."

Mr. Yeatman of St. Louis, to whom I have already alluded, and who was widely known and will be long remembered for his devotion to his most important duties during the war, writes me as follows : —

"The hospital was under the charge of Dr. Ira Russell, a very liberal and enlightened physician from

Massachusetts. Of all the nurses who entered the service in the Western department, your daughter was the only one previously trained and educated for the duties she assumed. She organized her corps of nurses, having been appointed supervisor, and went systematically to work to train the band of noble women who came with willing hands and hearts, but entirely without experience for the work. She succeeded admirably in her work, and we had no hospital in the Western department where nursing was brought to so great perfection. She continued in this position until stricken down by disease in August, 1864. During her sickness, while confined to bed, she continued to have the nurses report directly to her each day for advice and instruction. Her heart, mind, and body were given to her work, and she could rarely, if ever, be induced to seek relief or recreation outside of the hospital grounds. In connection with the Benton Barracks was the Refugee Hospital and the Freedman's Hospital, which she was in the habit of visiting and of rendering such service there as she was capable of performing. She was a true and generous Christian philanthropist, embracing all, of every race, sex, and condition, never sparing herself.

"My duties in connection with the Western Sanitary Commission brought me frequently in contact (almost daily when in the city), with your daughter, and so I am capable of bearing testimony to the fidelity and ability with which she discharged her duties."

In 1867 was published in Philadelphia an octavo volume entitled "Woman's Work in the War." It contains sketches of the lives of a great number of women from all parts of the Northern States, who were of service in the war. It is, so far as I know, accurate; and it seems surprisingly so, considering the large number of those concerning whom exact inquiry had to be made. A glance at the book shows that the records of different hospitals were examined and other sources of information made use of. Emily E. Parsons is one of those spoken of. I quote from the notice of her, the following extracts.

After stating her decided wish to volunteer in the war, this notice goes on, thus: —

"With her father's approval she consulted with Dr. Wyman, of Cambridge, how she could acquire the necessary instruction and training to perform the duties of a skilful nurse in the hospitals. Through his influence with Dr. Shaw, the Superintendent of the Massachusetts General Hospital, she was received into that institution as a pupil in the work of caring for the sick, in the dressing of wounds, in the preparation of diet for invalids, and in all that pertains to a well-regulated hospital. She was thoroughly and carefully instructed by the surgeons of the hospital, all of whom took great interest in fitting her for the im-

portant duties she proposed to undertake, and gave her every opportunity to practise, with her own hands, the labors of a good hospital nurse. Dr. Warren and Dr. Townshend, two distinguished surgeons, took special pains to give her all necessary information and the most thorough instruction. At the end of one year and a half of combined teaching and practice, she was recommended by Dr. Townshend to Fort Schuyler Hospital, on Long Island Sound, where she went in October, 1862, and for two months performed the duties of hospital nurse, in the most faithful and satisfactory manner."

After describing her service in that and another hospital the book goes on : —

"She was needed for a still more important service, and was placed as head nurse on the hospital steamer "City of Alton," Surgeon Turner in charge. A large supply of sanitary stores were entrusted to her care by the Western Sanitary Commission, and the steamer proceeded to Vicksburg, where she was loaded with about four hundred invalid soldiers, many of them sick past recovery, and returned as far as Memphis. On this trip the strength and endurance of Miss Parsons were tried to the utmost, and the ministrations of herself and her associates to the poor, helpless, and suffering men, several of whom died on the passage up the river, were constant and unremitting. . . .

"For a few weeks after her return to St. Louis, she

suffered from an attack of malarial fever, and on her recovery was assigned to duty at the Benton Barracks Hospital, the largest of all the hospitals in St. Louis, — built out of the amphitheatre and other buildings in the Fair Grounds of the St. Louis Agricultural Society, — and placed in charge of Surgeon Ira Russell, an excellent physician from Natick, Mass. In this large hospital there were often two thousand patients. . . .

"It was the duty of the nurses to attend to the special diet of the feebler patients, to see that the wards were kept in order, the beds properly made, the dressing of wounds properly done, to minister to the wants of the patients, and to give them words of good cheer, both by reading and conversation — softening the rougher treatment and manners of the male nurses by their presence, and performing the more delicate offices of kindness that are natural to women.

"In this important and useful service these nurses, many of them having but little experience, needed one of their own number of superior knowledge, judgment, and experience, to supervise their work, counsel and advise with them, instruct them in their duties, secure obedience to every necessary regulation, and good order in the general administration of this important branch of hospital service. For this position Miss Parsons was most admirably fitted, and discharged its duties with great fidelity and success for many months, — as long as Dr. Russell continued in charge of the hospital.

"The whole work of female nursing was reduced to

a perfect system, and the nurses under Miss Parsons influence became a sisterhood of noble women, performing a great and loving service to the maimed and suffering defenders of their country. In the organization of this system, and the framing of wise rules for carrying it into effect, Dr. Russell and Mr. Yeatman lent their counsel and assistance, and Dr. Russell, as the chief surgeon, entertained those enlightened and liberal views which gave the system a full chance to accomplish the best results. Under his administration, and Miss Parsons' superintendence of the nursing, the Benton Barracks Hospital became famous for its excellence, and the rapid recovery of the patients."

On June 18, 1864, my daughter was notified to attend a meeting of the medical staff of the hospital. She attended, expecting nothing unusual, and took her customary place. As soon as the staff was assembled, Drs. May and Russell rose, and Dr. May made an address to her, closing as follows : —

"The value of your individual services during this rebellion will not be unappreciated by the recipients of your kindness. These services have been rendered over a broad extent of country, in hospitals, and at Vicksburg during the memorable siege, when pestilence and death were hourly presented to your view. No one can appreciate your services better than the medical staff with whom you have labored, and the patients of this hospital. Our association has been of

long duration and of the most pleasant character. Thousands have left here who will associate with your name some of the most pleasant recollections of the past.

"Dr. Russell then said to her, 'I have the honor this evening in behalf of the medical staff whom I represent, to present to you this goblet as a slight, but sincere token of our appreciation of your services, and to beg you to accept the same.'"

This goblet, or vase, was of silver, lined with gold, and beautiful in form and workmanship. She brought it home, showed it to her parents, brothers, and sisters, then locked it up and kept it locked up. I have been able to find, among her intimate friends, but one who ever saw it. I believe no one else out of her own family ever saw it; and of her cousins and many friends I have found one or two only who ever heard of it. Her brother, Charles Chauncey Parsons, was absent from home, in the army, at the time she returned. He is sitting by me as I write, and tells me he never saw the vase, and never heard of it until to-day.

I think this circumstance illustrates one trait in her character. She very seldom referred in any way to any of her past services, and I never heard

from her one word in relation to them, or to any of her work, which has the slightest flavor of display or self-ascription.

I now quote again from the book already referred to, "Woman's Work in the War": —

"She continued till August, 1864, when her health again failed, and she returned to her home in Cambridge. On recovering her health she concluded to enter upon the same work in the Eastern department, but the return of peace and the disbanding of a large portion of the army rendered her services in the hospitals no longer necessary.

"From this time she devoted herself at home to working for the freedmen and refugees, collecting clothing and garden-seeds for them, many boxes of which she shipped to the Western Sanitary Commission, at St. Louis, to be distributed in the Mississippi Valley, where they were greatly needed, and were received as a blessing from the Lord, by the poor refugees and freedmen, who in many instances were without the means to help themselves, or to buy seed for the next year's planting.

"In the spring of 1865, she took a great interest in the Sanitary Fair, held at Chicago, collected many valuable gifts for it, and was sent for by the Committee of Arrangements to go out as one of the managers of the department furnished by the New Jerusalem church — the different churches having separate departments in the Fair. This duty she fulfilled, with

great pleasure and success, and the general results of the Fair were all that could be desired."

"In concluding this sketch of the labors of Miss Parsons in the care and nursing of our sick and wounded soldiers, and in the sanitary and other benevolent enterprises called forth by the war, it is but just to say that, in every position she occupied, she performed her part with judgment and fidelity, and always brought to her work a spirit animated by the highest motives, and strengthened by communion with the Infinite Spirit from whom all love and wisdom come to aid and bless the children of men. Everywhere as she went among the sick and suffering, she brought the sunshine of a cheerful and loving heart, beaming from a countenance expressive of kindness and good-will and sympathy to all."

"Her presence in the hospital was always a blessing, and cheered and comforted many a despondent heart, and compensated in some degree, for the absence of the loved ones at home."

I will now let her letters speak for themselves. I begin with those sent home from Fort Schuyler. There are but a few of them, and I give extracts, more or less copious, from every one of these.

LETTER I.

FORT SCHUYLER HOSPITAL,
October 22.

DEAR SISTER SABRA, — I thought you and my family would like to know my whereabouts. We have still only four hundred men. Yesterday I came down here and took charge of a ward of forty-eight men and four attendants. Think of finding yourself all at once at the head of such a family. I came here in the morning and immediately commenced work. I should not think the ward had been thoroughly cleaned since it was occupied, for they have only had orderlies here, and the head surgeon wished me to take charge at once. It is very large; will receive fifty-eight beds if necessary. I had a general rectification, baskets of bandages and lint and surgical matters put in order for the surgeon, stoves put in order, taught my orderlies how to make beds, &c. This morning I had my whole ward swept out, under beds, in corners, and everywhere, my beds properly made &c; then in comes the surgeon and assistant; I attend them, see that they have what is needed and assist if necessary; this is my hard hour, it is so hard to see the poor men suffer; oh those horrid probes! Then, when all this is through, the surgeon writes out his diet and medical orders in two books, which I keep. My day begins early, reveille at six, I must be up before to get beds made, ward

swept out, dressings attended to, and wounds unbandaged and washed ready for the surgeon's inspection, and whatever he chooses to do. He comes at half-past eight. This morning the head surgeon of the hospital appeared, and after an examination, informed me that my ward was the nicest looking one in the whole hospital.

Monday. I am now going to try to finish my letter; this is the first time I have found time, unless I drove fearfully, and hardly then. We have new arrangements now; I think I will give you my day's routine. First, up early; one of my orderlies sweeps down the ward, the two others take, one each side of the ward, and make the beds, at which I must assist if I want the ward ready in time. Before it is quite done the orderly who goes for breakfast leaves with another dining-room orderly; I work on, breakfast comes, one kind for those sick in the ward, and the other, house-rations for the rest of my men and the orderlies. One of the attendants has set out the plates on the dresser which runs round the first room, — dining-room it is called. I prepare on plates the breakfast for each man on sick-rations according to the rules the Doctor has written out in his order-book for me. A good while previous to each meal I must send down the order for it, signed with my name and ward.

I am *matron* of Ward 6; I have at present forty-five children, besides my orderlies, who require a tight hand kept over them. Some of them will leave soon and the ward be filled up to its full number; probably, the

surgeon said, with bad cases; my ward has the worst cases in it now that are here, with the exception of one or two elsewhere. I like the surgeon very much who attends to this ward; he is very skilful, firm, and at the same time gentle and kind as possible. He is a thorough gentleman, to my great delight; the rest of the doctors are gentlemanly, pleasant men. As my ward has so many bad cases it is uncommonly interesting; therefore a group of them generally meet here, with more satisfaction to themselves than to the patients, I think. After breakfast, I see to the finishing up of the ward. My doctor is fearfully particular. Just as I began to write about him, I heard a tap, and there he was, for his night report; he is a very handsome man, tall and dignified.

Tuesday night. I had to stop last night to attend to my children. When the ward is in order I get ready for the surgeon, see that the baskets containing various applications and dressings and the table the Doctor uses are standing in a particular place in the ward; the basins with sponges and the pails with hot and cold water in their places. I have barely time to do this before in marches the Doctor, at nine o'clock; then he writes down his prescriptions and diet list for the day in his two books, as he visits the patients, then he hands me the books; I am attending him all the time like a white shadow; that is a part of my duty. Then the surgical work commences: oh! with all his kindness, the Doctor is firm as a rock, and everything has to be gone through with. The other day he was almost

four hours getting through; he is not always so long. Then I write off my dinner-orders, send them, give out medicines; then some other items; all the while the surgeon is in the ward I must be in attendance, to assist or wait upon him. Then dinner; my patients are divided into two classes; those who are well enough to dine in the dining-room on house-rations, and those who dine in the ward on different diets; to the latter I give out dinner according to the Doctor's orders in the diet list. After dinner, I have some housekeeping matters to see to; yesterday, counting out the linen for forty-five men. This time is supposed to be passed by me in recreation. This afternoon I had a house-cleaning of the deepest dye. I found a whiskey bottle under one bed, apple pie on a table, both delinquencies; if the whiskey bottle could have been traced home, the owner would probably have been put under arrest. The Doctor was desirous to have the beds arranged in a particular manner, and I worked till I could hardly stand to get it done; after it was all finished, he walked in; he took a look down the long ward, and then turned to me with a most approving expression. I have work to do constantly in this way. I make out my supper-lists in the afternoon and send them before five. I send my men for supper, then give it out as I do the other meals; after supper, see that the patients are attended to properly; then take the surgical baskets, put them in order, roll up bandages and make new. My bandage roller is in constant use; I arrange everything exactly in its place; my surgeon seems to

rely upon my order and readiness a good deal. The other night I was awoke about one or two in the morning, to supply him with powders he wanted for another ward; I had them right at hand. In the evening I have to see that the dressings the Doctor ordered have been properly performed or do them myself, and see after the many wants of my children; so my men seem to me. The Doctor generally makes me a farewell visit about nine o'clock. The officer of the day also looks in upon me, and I report to him about anything he wishes to know. All this routine takes in a quantity of minor matters. I am writing in the evening because I cannot find time in the day; perhaps I shall to-morrow. I must go to bed now.

Thursday afternoon. I hope you will make allowance for the hurried way in which my letters are written, and not be astonished if the writing and spelling are a little peculiar; my head is almost beside itself with all that it has to think of. I have given you but a distant idea of all that I have to look after, *walk* after and bear the responsibility of. This morning I had to assist the surgeon in some very painful duties; one man fairly cried; I felt when the Doctor left as if my nerves were all on edge. Yesterday I had two cases sent to me from the operating room; one came first; I had him all washed, the head properly bandaged and the man in bed, and the bed ready for the other one, the bandages and bowl and sponges also, before Number Two appeared with the Doctor. The Doctor cast a very approving look round, and I went right to work to at-

tend to the new one. The Doctor trusted me enough to send me Number One without coming himself, though it was the first time I have had an operation of any extent here. It came very natural. The Doctor was fairly benignant when he left. I feel all the time afraid of failure, of not coming up to the mark. My chamber, in one corner, is ten feet by seven and one-half; I have it all to myself at night; in the day time it is an actual office for surgeons, patients and everybody else to come to; the nurse's room in a ward generally is. I have a narrow iron bedstead, a small table, a looking-glass, my upright tub, — which same is an immense comfort, — my trunk and valise, two pails of water, a chair and a wash bowl; behold my furniture. The building is not yet finished, and it is nothing but rough boards, to be plastered some time in the dim future. I have pine plank shelves in my room, and on them are kept the medicines, bowl of surgeon's sponges, stores of different kinds, all belonging to the nurse's department.

One of my orderlies is in the guard-house to-day. My ward has, I believe, the best surgeon except the head of all, and I do not know but as good as he. He just now told me, with a very beaming face, that he expected to have some very heavy cases in. I hope he will be happy!

Friday afternoon. I have a great many wants to reply to and meet. The other night, as I thought all was done, one poor fellow had neuralgia in his arm, and I was obliged to rub it for a long time before he

was relieved. I have a great many things to do for the welfare of the patients in that way. One poor fellow cried like a child this morning under the surgeon's hands, and it was a long time before I could comfort him. At night the surgeon goes to the fort to sleep, and I am left with the guardianship of all these men. I have a night watcher, but he is not a nurse. I felt a little anxious the other day, or rather night, when I had two cases just from operation, to say nothing of the others.

To-day was grand inspection day, and such a day! In the first place, the Doctors were coming in the middle of the morning, and the ward had to be in a state of supernatural order by that time; all the dressings done and patients by the side of their beds. Oh, the getting ready! I confided my state of mind to the surgeon as we were working together, and he agreed with me; that was some comfort. At the proper time the door opens and the whole surgical and medical staff walk inside, and, standing at the head of the ward, the head of the hospital, Dr. Bartholomew, reads the roll-call, the men reply; inspection of the ward follows; I had nothing to do but receive a very profound bow and reply to that same. I felt perfectly exhausted by the time all was over, the preparations had been so fatiguing. This lovely day comes once a week; this is general inspection, particular inspection is at eleven o'clock, Sundays! It is a queer place.

I made a funny mistake the other day. The men are very fond of showing me the pictures of their wives

and babies; I was passing a bed lately and saw among the articles my patient was arranging, an ambrotype case. I took it up supposing it might be his wife; it was a very pretty girl's picture; I said, "This is your wife, is it not?" the poor fellow turned redder than red and said no, it was not his wife! but looking so sheepishly happy all the while it was easy to tell what she was. I put it down and turned the subject immediately; he seemed to consider me rather in the light of a confidential friend afterwards.

There are many things that are trying in this way of life, but they are inseparable from it and must be accepted as such. I did not expect it would be *couleur de rose* when I came, and one cannot expect in making the voyage of life always to meet with fair weather. Our Master did not, and what right have we to? It is a great deal to be thankful for when he gives us some work to do for Him, only we have to be very careful how we do it, careful to do His will first of all. I have just been reading the words in Isaiah, "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," and the thought that we can *always* rest under the shadow of that rock is a great comfort. One of my men has been dangerously ill; when he was better, but could not sit up, I read to him in the Psalms one evening; he seemed very much pleased, and the next morning his hand was out to meet mine before I could get to it. He will get well now, but it was a narrow escape with him. I have a great variety in my ward; one belligerent individual is under arrest, and I have to see that he does not go out of

doors; a slight addition to the rest of my cares. He did go to-day and I was obliged to report him.

Please write to me and mention every detail, and what you are going to do, so that I can imagine you doing it when the time comes; it takes away from the lonely feeling. I do not want ideas, my head has so many new ones it is nearly beside itself. I want facts, — I wish you would give my love to those of my friends who are kind enough to remember me. I wish some of them would write. Be sure and tell me how mother looks, I never knew before how much I loved her.

You must excuse the style of my letters, for they are written among many interruptions. It is nearly ten now. I have just been through my ward and visited every bed. As I arranged one boy whom I stood by in his pain yesterday morning, he looked up at me with such a loving look, it made me think of his far off mother. They feel what is done for them very much, sometimes. I must go to bed now and get rest for the morning work. My feet ache, but I expect they will get used to it.

LETTER II.

FORT SCHUYLER HOSPITAL,
November 1.

DEAR MOTHER, — It is evening; I am obliged to write now, for I have no time in the day, as a general thing, nor much at night. To-day my ward was washed

from one end to the other; I superintend and assist in various ways; just think of moving fifty-one beds out and in again! After supper I had to give out clean under-clothing to all the patients. I wonder what a mother, who thinks it is something to look after two or three, would say to forty-four; I said so to one of my patients; the idea, differently expressed, amused him. I am told that the ward will be filled to its utmost capacity presently. There are fifty-one beds in it now, and there can be more, though I hope not; fifty-one wounded men are about enough for one ward. Several of the forty-four now here are convalescent, but some suffer very much. I go round at night seeing to them, covering them up, and the other night I came to one poor boy, badly wounded and sick; as I laid the clothes over him he half opened his eyes to see who it was, and when he saw me, gave such a pleasant smile it quite went to my heart; he laid his head down again as if entirely satisfied. He does not get well very fast, and I am afraid he is going to have more trouble. His wound is a musket-shot in the shoulder, and the Doctor is obliged to take out pieces of diseased bone or splinters of bone: I dread the sight of the instruments; he is a mere boy. They seem so much pleased when they wake and find me bending over them, — it is not much I can do, but that is something. These wounds are trying to the poor fellows. I have all sorts of characters, and several nations in my ward. The Doctor came to my door just now to make his night's tour among the patients;

I attend him, candle in hand. My ward is now arranged for the night, and I am going to make my last round.

Sunday Morning. My ward is all in order, waiting for the inspectors who are performing operations elsewhere. After it was in order I sat down and read a little while; now I am writing for a few minutes. I do not want anything done on Sundays that can be helped; that is the reason I am able to sit down a little while.

The Doctor spoke hopefully of my worst case this morning, and I am now in hopes he will save his arm, but he suffers a great deal; this morning, when I was washing it for the surgeon to apply the dressings, he could hardly bear the sponge, the arm was so sensitive; three ball-shots through it. He is very patient and good; I took him some Cologne the other day and it refreshed him very much. Mrs. Sampson Reed and Mrs. Worcester asked me to apply to them for what I needed; will you ask them if they would like to send me some Cologne water; when the men are faint and sick after the surgeon has left them, it is very refreshing. I have sent my orderlies for dinner, and am expecting it every minute.

Afternoon. Instead of dinner, they sent me two cases from the operating room; they put a damper on *my* dinner. The poor fellows are quiet now, considering what they have gone through. One of them was suffering extremely; a fever-heat had come on in the wounded arm; I put a cold water compress on, and in a few minutes he felt better, and then fell asleep;

so I sat by him to keep the flies off, and presently in came the surgeon. I had to assist him in dressing one of the men, then he left, and the work went on. I feel very much afraid of failing at some point, it is such a responsibility, and, as one of the ladies remarked to me, we were never "out at service" before. I have two charming friends here, Miss Spaulding and Miss Mary Hill. I enjoy them very much; they are the only friends I have here with whom I have any intimacy; I am so busy that I have no time to go out to see any one, so they come to see me, when they can. I have plenty of fresh air from windows and doors, to say nothing of cracks which are to be boarded in by and by. My dinner consists of government soup, bread, and perhaps a little rice, or sometimes there are more Isabella grapes than my patients can eat. Breakfast and supper, bread and milk; my breakfast has to be taken in such a hurry that I do not eat more than is necessary. I take supper a little more leisurely. You have hardly a conception of the wants of a ward full of patients. And then the ward has to be kept in such a state of order, — the beds must all be made after one particular order and pattern; then they must all be EXACTLY in a line or my surgeon finds it out; he stands at one end of the ward and looks down, if one bed is in the least projecting an orderly has to fly down and push it in. Then they every now and then find some new way of making the beds a little more symmetrical than the previous; I have been taught my third arrangement to-day. Imagine arranging the

covers of forty-four beds. As my Doctor is a man of genius he may think of another way before the week is out. Some of the men make their own beds, but I have to arrange them afterwards, also examine them in search of contraband articles of food under the pillows; I found a quantity of cheese under one. The Doctor immediately confiscated it in great indignation, it not being good for sick people. Close by me is Miss Spaulding's ward; between her Doctor and mine is quite a rivalry as to which ward looks the best. We do not care an atom, and so we have a good deal of amusement over it. The two doctors survey each other's wards, and then each declares his own the best looking. I have not had time to see my friend's yet, but am going some day; in the mean time she comes in and reports to me the remarks of our two housekeepers, as we call them.

We are having a very high wind, and the barn-like building rocks like a cradle, or rather creaks like one. We had a tempest the other day and night; my friends asked me the next day if I was not afraid the building would blow over; I told them, no, I did not think that anything would be allowed to happen to so many helpless people; so I slept in peace, feeling that they took care of me and I of them, under Higher Power.

LETTER III.

FORT SCHUYLER HOSPITAL,
November 8.

DEAR MOTHER,— I hoped to have continued my journal this week, but it has not been possible. Early in the week I had a new patient, — a young man who had reamputation of the arm performed on Sunday. He was brought into my ward as it was more comfortable than the one he was in; he was so ill that there was little chance of his life; you may imagine the charge he was to me: all the day I kept in the ward either directly nursing him or keeping my eye on him while about my work; in the evening sat by his side till relieved by the watcher who took charge of him during the night; so all my writing time was taken.

I am the only *nurse* in the ward, so that when the surgeon was not in, the case fell on me. I allowed no one else to touch his bed or his food; the surgeon sometimes pours out his porter, but it is handed me to give. He is doing well now, though great care is necessary; I am writing near his bed. They will not let me work day and night both, so at ten I am ordered off to bed. I have been fighting the weather lately. The *snow* came in at the open slats on the roof, and we were nearly frozen, and wet into the bargain. I grew desperate, and when the ward-master came in, insisted upon something being done. I got possession of a ladder, one of my men mounted up, tied slats together, and

wound up by nailing one of my sheets, torn in strips, over crevices that could be stopped in no other way; we finally got ahead of the deluge, and I commenced drying bed clothes by instalments round the stoves; by half-past-nine, evening, they were mostly dry, and the floor of the ward drying also. I went about all day in my water-proof cloak, hood over my head; I wear my india-rubber shoes all the time to help keep my poor feet warm. We are not warm, for there are so many cracks in these unfinished buildings that a regiment of stoves could hardly make them really warm. I only wish the contractor had been here the other day; I would have put him under the biggest hole. My health is good, so I conclude this primitive way of life suits me; at any rate, I shall stay by my sick men while I can. If it is right for me to be here I shall have strength given me. My little spirit-lamp is a great comfort to me; when I boil my milk over it, it warms me a good deal: I also heat up tepid bowls of government soup. If you have another box to come to me, please send me some more alcohol, and, also, may I have your white aprons, unless you would prefer making me some, — I have not enough to keep clean. The box arrived to-day; I wanted to embrace it. I fell into a rapture over the bandages, — they are beauties. Somebody sent me some Scripture cards and pictures; the men were very much pleased with them; I shall give them the books to-morrow. My candlesticks are loves, I have one on the table now. We want bandages more than anything except old

linen and cotton, — we cannot have too much of that; squares of linen or old damask, hemmed for pocket-handkerchiefs, are very acceptable; the soldiers are very glad of a clean handkerchief at hand. I hoped to have written to-morrow, but I am to have three operation cases to attend to. The poor fellows dread it; I have been trying to give them comfort; two are rather bad cases. To-morrow is inspection day also, as my surgeon reminded me to-night; he says he is coming at eight o'clock.

I am within two yards of a stove and am cold; one of the surgeons agreed with me to-day that we would never, *never* go to the North Pole. I did so enjoy your letter to-night; if you knew the pleasure it gave you would write often and tell me what you are going to do, so that then I may imagine you. I was assisting the surgeon when your letter came; I was so glad when I was able to sit down and read it. Sarah came to see me this week and brought me some flannel shirts for my men. I was very thankful for them; I went round that cold stormy day putting them on my men: I have to help the poor lame fellows to dress.

I hope these buildings will be finished up soon. I have sent all my men to bed and am waiting the visit of the surgeon, and then to bed, I hope.

Tuesday. I am now trying to finish my letter. We did not have operations on Sunday on account of the chilly rain, *some* of which penetrated through; thanks to my energetic efforts on Saturday, not much. To-day is lovely — quite mild, and the patients able to go

out in the sunshine and smoke their darling, horrid pipes.

This morning we were ordered to prepare for an inspection by the surgeon-general of the State. After being made nearly frantic by the efforts to be in wonderful order he never came! My very sick patient is a little better, I have just been washing his face and one poor hand. I asked him when I had done, if he felt any better, "Oh yes," he replied, with such a grateful look. I take the whole care of him, except dressing the wound; I wait upon the surgeon, and assist, if necessary. I sit by him all the evening; he was very restless last evening; I stroked his hand and his hair, and quieted him at intervals, but he did not get much quieter till the Doctor came and gave him morphine. He is obliged to take morphine every night.

I love my ward better and better; and if some things are rough and trying, why that is a reason for staying and trying to make them better, not for running away. It would be poor soldiering to run when the enemy appeared.

I lose several of my patients this week; three go back to the regiments; six others go home, too much disabled to fight any more. I hope my ward will not be filled up till all the carpenter-work is done, the noise is so trying to patients. The most useful width for bandages is one and three-fourths inches, two and a half inches, three inches, — the two and a half most used; we do not use thread lint, but a good deal of that scraped with a knife; squares of old linen for handker-

chiefs are useful. The slippers you sent are very useful; they are on the feet of two wearers who admire them very much.

Evening. — I have had such a piece of work this evening! my three ward stoves taken down and two much better ones put up in their place; consequently, a new arrangement of beds, which I could not put off till morning; it is all right now, and the Doctor has just been in and expressed his admiration. I am finishing my letter, and then must go to bed, as my night-watch has orders to call me at quarter before six; when I come home, I am going to sleep for a week steady; I have perhaps enough sleep now, but I am obliged to improve my time to get it. The bugle has just sounded, and I am going the round of my beds. Good night, dear mother.

LETTER IV.

FORT SCHUYLER HOSPITAL,
November 25.

DEAR MOTHER, — I hope to be able to write a few lines to you to-night. I opened the box yesterday,— it was lovely; my orderlies opened it for me; to pay them I gave each a pair of brilliant slippers. They sailed down the ward, and in about a minute I heard patter, patter, and my door was surrounded by applicants to know if I had any slippers to spare? Very soon the

slippers had gone. I want you to tell the ladies that they must make their shoes *smaller;* the men have small feet. If the ladies are inclined to make any more, I shall be very thankful for them. I told you of my friend, Miss Spaulding; our doctors fraternize as we do, so in the afternoon in comes her Doctor. I show him my bandages, he ejaculates, "Splendid!" I share them with him, giving him a large box; also some cologne. Please thank Mrs. Reed for the cologne and bay-water. All the other articles were lovely in my eyes, even the corkscrew. I kissed your dear markings on my sheets. I am so glad *you* marked them. You speak of pasting up cracks, — that would involve lining the whole building. It is composed of one layer of planking, not perfectly joined anywhere, and the ventilators in the roof so imperfect that we were deluged and snowed on; the water literally ran in the wards. Last week, I think on Friday night, I was obliged to get up in the night, put on my wrapper and call my night-watch to help move my bed round because I was being rained on, — I being really *sick* with an influenza at the time; and in the morning I had to jump up because it was raining where I had moved to, and I so ill I could hardly get up at all. You have no conception what I have been putting up with here; but my health has been quite, indeed, very good till this cold came. I am getting well fast, and we move in a day or two into a nicely finished ward, or I would not have told you of the state of things; Clytie (her dog) would not have gone to bed in such a place. I trust our new place will be water-

tight; if it is not, I shall set up a tub, like the philosopher of old. If I had known what I was to meet, I should not have felt equal to the encounter. I am glad I have done it, for I know now what I can live through. Some of the ladies expressed it: "Any one who has been at Fort Schuyler Hospital can bear anything." Now, as far as weather is concerned, I think we shall do well.

The responsibility of my ward is very heavy; my surgeon is a very good surgeon and physician, who has temporarily left his practice, like many others, in order to see and attend to cases which only occur in time of war, and are very interesting to the faculty. This ensures to the soldiers the advantage of as good attendance, in many instances, as they would have in the city. The surgeon of this ward is a strict disciplinarian, and very pleasant also; so we get along nicely. He has expressed (to others) his satisfaction with me very decidedly. I hope I shall be able to go on doing my work. I have a great deal of control over my men; they are a very good set, on the whole. I am sitting on the foot of one of the beds near the stove, quietly writing. I wonder whether I have been led to my future vocation for this life — that of a Sister of Charity; if it is so, I hope I shall be of comfort to somebody and many bodies. There are a great many trying and a great many pleasant things about it; there is one good thing, it gives one plenty to do. I owe letters to many friends. Please thank them all very heartily for me and give them much love, and say I would have

written in answer if I had time; letters are very precious here.

I think my new ward will be very pleasant as far as warmth is concerned. It will be neater-looking than this. I am very thankful for the candles you sent me, without them I should not know what to do. Candles are one of the things they economize upon here, and we do not have *half* enough. I am obliged to dress by candle-light, as the ward is not ready for the Doctor unless I am to the fore; my night-watch has orders to call me at a quarter before six. It would be very pleasant to see the sun rise over the water, if I had time to look out. But I must hurry and dress, for I have to start a good many wheels. I give medicines three times a day; the first time is before breakfast, and that is early. My medicine glasses are invaluable, — in use several times a day; as for my bandage-roller, I do not know what I should do without it. I am some times obliged to alter the bandages sent, and also to make a number of the different widths called for by different cases. I wish, if the ladies are not tired of the subject, they would make me some more of the widths I wrote for in my letter a week or so since. There is one thing we are in great want of, — that is, old linen or cotton, — old underclothes for instance, — I can tear off all the parts that are good for anything.

Saturday evening. I will try now and finish my letter. On Thursday, the ladies of Westchester gave a Thanksgiving dinner to all the patients, — six hundred and fifty men in all. There is a large building nearly

finished, for the use of the officers of the Hospital; the partitions were not yet up on the ground floor and they could therefore use it as a great dining-room. My new ward is Ward 3, Section C. We moved yesterday. Oh dear! was I not tired when I went to bed, all in order, floors washed, beds made, patients attended to. The ward is neat and water-tight; rather an odd recommendation in a house, but a necessary one here. This coming week we expect one thousand wounded; I shall then have sixty men in my ward, its full complement. I hope I shall be able to keep on doing my duty. I had no idea one had to give up and go through so much to become a Sister of Charity; I have great respect for all who do it rightly.

LETTER V.

FORT SCHUYLER HOSPITAL,
December 7.

DEAR MOTHER, — This letter will not go till the middle of the week. I have the ward all ready for inspection, — Sunday afternoon being the day for that interesting ceremony. My surgeon told me this morning that six hundred wounded men were on their way here from Washington and the steamer was due to-day. He also said that this ward would be filled up; they may arrive any moment, or not till to-morrow. I want to have the poor men in bed comfortably. Just think of tossing about on the waves in a crowded steamer

such a day as this, sick and wounded too. It was very cold here this morning, water froze in my room and I nearly froze too; we are promised small stoves in our rooms, *some time*. In the meantime we shiver.

I suppose there will be some severe cases among the new arrivals, and I shall probably have some of the worst in my ward; as the surgeon of it is a very fine one he has those cases. I wish you would thank the ladies for the articles they sent me; I was so glad to have clean pocket-handkerchiefs for the men. Please tell the ladies if they could only look in upon a ward and see the comfort these small things give it would encourage them in all their work. The soldiers were very much pleased with the handkerchiefs Mrs. Newell's little daughter hemmed. I told them about her doing the work: they were much interested, and I saw them examining the stitches with great interest. My friends are very kind to remember me in my absence so well; such kindly thoughts help one on and take away a little of the lonely feeling that will come at times. It is an odd life, — living so entirely among men. Only once in a while when we nurses have time we see each other for a few minutes. At first, it seemed to me that I must wake up and find it a dream; now, it is as if my former life lay away back, out of my reach, and this was my real life. I felt afraid lately that my physical strength would not hold out. I was so ill with influenza that I could hardly sit up, and while in that condition I had to carry on the affairs of a surgical ward; no light task at any time. I am not quite well

yet, and when I found myself nearly frozen and not well this morning my heart misgave me as to the possibility of my bearing up under it; but I felt a little better presently, and then came the news of these new arrivals to be, and I thought I would stay while I could, and appeared to give satisfaction to the surgeon. If my health *does* fail me I can come home then. I think I shall be helped to stay, one way and another; I have noticed one thing since I have been here — that no trial has been permitted to be more than I *could* bear; it has always been lightened at what seemed to be the last moment, or else, I have been taken care of in some wholly unexpected way; so I remember this and take courage, and try to go on. You remember, I suppose, that the day you were here I was taking care of a man shot in some kind of quarrel with his Captain; I do not know the circumstances, but the man is one of those characters you read of among the lower classes; I should think a regular rough. As he gains a little strength he does not improve on acquaintance very much, though he may have some good things that one would like. I had to reprove him for swearing to-day. I told him never to use such a word again while in the ward, for I would not have it. I suppose I shall have all sorts of characters to deal with. I have had very nice men thus far. They, for the most part begin the day by reading their Bibles. The very sick man I was speaking of was very glad to have me read the Bible to him. He asked me the other night to read him the fifteenth chapter of Luke; it treats of the return of the

prodigal son; he seemed to feel it a good deal; he appears grateful for what I have done for him. I do not know whether he will recover or not; he has the constant thirst that accompanies gun-shot wounds, and we are obliged to feed him with milk or water every few minutes, night and day. I do not sit up with him during the night, as the surgeon seemed to think I had better not, and, till it is *necessary* I do not mean to, as my day work is enough for me. Sixteen hours of wakeful responsibility, and a good deal of the time, if not all of it, doing work, is enough for a woman, I think. It is evening now, and the men have not come. Think of them tossing about another night! How they must be suffering! My men are quiet around the ward, and I am by the sick man writing and keeping watch, the light is dim. I have thought of so many things I wanted to say to you and had no time for. I have not heard a word about Thanksgiving, — I believe the family have forgotten me. If they do not write me a long letter soon I shall be furious. Tell me all sorts of little things. I dreamed the other night I was at home. I believe I was unpacking and putting my room in order. I should not wonder if it was many a month before I did the latter. Is it cold with you? I want to know all about it.

My daughter's health and strength soon after failed so much that it was apparent both to herself and to the surgeons of the hospital that she must leave it at least for a time. She did so, and

visited a friend in the city of New York. We wrote to her, advising, perhaps urging, her to give up the idea of being a nurse in a military hospital. She replied in a letter from which I make the following extracts.

NEW YORK, January 4.

DEAR MOTHER, — Colonel Frank Howe is very desirous I should be at work among the wounded, so is Dr. Harris, the inspector of hospitals here, and I believe in some other places. These two gentlemen have shown themselves very kind and friendly towards me. They expressed very earnestly, both to me and to others, their desire to put me in what they consider a suitable field of action, or, as they express it, where I shall be of most use. They really seem to consider me of some value; they are both trying together, and I leave the matter in their hands, as they are two men who can be trusted, with regard to their integrity, honor and a desire to serve the soldiers in the best and wisest manner; and they are very considerate also of me, — so you have reason to be satisfied. I have good, judicious friends around me on all sides. They can do what only officials can do and they spare me contact with red tape, for which I desire to be thankful.

My life at Fort Schuyler suited me in many respects, and I hope to lead substantially the same life elsewhere. To have a ward full of sick men under my care is all I ask; I should like to live so all the rest

of my life. Do not you be anxious about me, but wait quietly and patiently.

I am going to send you the report of Colonel Howe's establishment. He gave me a copy of it the other day and I am sure it will interest you. He took me all over his establishment, telling me how he lived there and about his work; I wish you could have heard him; the men seemed to love him so, it is beautiful to see him among them. I wish you to show the reports I send to the ladies, as I think they will be interested in them; they are the accounts of most admirable institutions. In my old ward most of my men began the day with their Bibles, and these Bibles had been almost all of them given to them. The good that is being done now is perfectly beautiful.

I have done my work, and I think I have done it pretty well too. It is the opinion of most of those who are now over these things that the ladies who do them voluntarily do them better than hired nurses, and they like to secure our services. If I had not succeeded pretty well at Fort Schuyler, Dr. Bartholomew would never have said, "that he would do almost anything rather than have Miss Parsons go." This speech is not for everybody, for it would seem egotistical, but I want you should know it. I expect to work for the soldiers some way or other, soon, I hope. Do not talk about my plans, but keep quiet and remember one thing; I am in the army just as Chauncy is, and I must be held to work just as he is; you would never think of requesting he might not be sent on picket duty because

it was hard work. This same hard work is the condition on which I have either mental or bodily health. A week ago the surgeon in whose ward I was so long at Fort Schuyler, came to see me and told me about my old patients. One of them in whom I was much interested had died, leaving a family.

She remained in New York some three weeks, when her health seemed to be re-established. She became acquainted with Mrs. Fremont, who was endeavoring to supply the personal needs of the military hospitals in St. Louis, and who wrote to persons then in charge of those hospitals concerning my daughter. The reply was an urgent request that Emily should go there at once. And I then received from my daughter a letter from which I make the following extracts. One of them refers to an agency connected with work for the army which she could do at home, which agency was offered to me for her.

NEW YORK, January 22.

DEAR FATHER, — I await the answer to a telegram which I sent you, asking your consent to my going to St. Louis. I feel bound to accept the position offered me. Mrs. Fremont and the people in St. Louis are holding this place open for me. The extreme distance will be an objection to you, but in the work to which I have pledged myself there can be no such

limit as time or space. I received your letter relative to the agency this morning; it is out of the question my undertaking such a work, — I am not fitted for it. This St. Louis opportunity gives me what I can do, and wish to do, and I believe it to be my only chance for just what I could wish. My journey on will be cared for in every way. If in your telegraphic answer you have discouraged my going, or have not decided at all, I wish you would send me a message by telegraph *at once*, granting consent. St. Louis is very healthy. I am to see Mrs. Fremont this morning by appointment; she expresses herself to Captain Nichols as very desirous I should go. She says there are no experienced, trained nurses there, and there is a great want of them.

P.S. — Tell mother not to be anxious, but trustful.

I wrote, giving my consent, although reluctantly; for her experience at Fort Schuyler had rather confirmed my fears that she was not strong enough for the work she desired to do. The condition of affairs at St. Louis was not encouraging. There had been, and indeed still was, severe fighting all down the Mississippi, and especially at Vicksburg and Arkansas Post, whence the sick and wounded were brought, in great numbers, to be cared for at St. Louis. Every available building in that city was converted into a hospital, and supplied with a

medical staff and a corps of nurses, and all other necessary arrangements were made as rapidly as possible. But at present these arrangements were incomplete. The only decided advantage which St. Louis had over Fort Schuyler was in the climate. It was the exposure to the sea-winds which proved to be more than Emily could bear. But while the failure of her health and strength at Fort Schuyler had taught her that there were limits to her capacity of endurance, they had not changed her belief that in work of this kind she could best discharge her duty; nor had they weakened her determination to find such work somewhere. There was much in the position at St. Louis which commended itself to her. She doubted with good reason, whether any opportunity would be offered to her, open to less objection; and on the whole decided to go there. Having come to this conclusion, she yielded to what seemed to be the urgency of the case, and left New York before she received my answer to her letter. The next letter her mother received from her was written in pencil, at Crestline, on the way to St. Louis. I give it only to show, that however strong were her desire and purpose to continue in the use she had chosen and entered upon, she was neither wilful nor obstinate about it.

LETTER I.

HOTEL AT CRESTLINE, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER, — If you think at any time that father would be happier to have me at home, or that it is best for me to be there, you must let me know, and I will do what you say. I hope I shall be guided to do what is right.

LETTER II.

LAWSON HOSPITAL, ST. LOUIS,
January 10.

DARLING MOTHER, — I have received your last letter, and glad enough was I to get it; it was delicious; you would write twice a week, if you knew what a longing I had for home news. I want to know everything about everybody. And now for *my* news; I am going to Dixie! Mr. Hasard came here day before yesterday and asked me if I would go down the river in the boat that was going to bring back the sick and wounded from places along the river, —Vicksburg, I believe, — and other places. He wished me to go to take charge of the other nurses, and of the linen-room, as it is called, — that is, the place where supplies of different kinds are kept, — and see to their giving out. The principal reason he said he wanted me, was as a

trained surgical nurse. On coming up the river with the wounded, there are not enough surgeons or nurses to take care of all, and he wanted me, as I could dress wounds and nurse, to go for that reason. He said he thought I should do a great deal of good in that way. He had evidently made up his mind about it. I asked him what the surgeon who goes in charge of the boat thought of it; he said that he wanted me to go. This surgeon is a very fine one, I am told. It is necessary he should be, as the post is a most responsible one. I told Mr. Hasard I would do what he and Dr. Alexander, the head surgeon here, thought was best; I wished to do what was right in the matter. The result was, that Dr. A. said that he would let me go if he could have an experienced nurse sent him in my place; this Mr. Hasard engaged to do. Mr. Hasard is President of the Commission in which I am enlisted, and orders all such things. He has been very kind to me; so, I probably shall start in the "City of Alton," and go down the river. I did not think it right to refuse; and, indeed, I could not very well. My surgeons both say they are sorry to have me go. One of them told me to-night that my men told him I had been like a mother to them; they do not want me to leave them; but Mr. Hasard said that it was very difficult to find a competent person to do what he wished me to do, and he thought I should be of great use as a nurse. I told him I was almost afraid I should not be able to do as well as he wished. He replied that, if he had not felt that I was the very person for the

work, he should not have placed me in such a position. What will happen to me next I do not know ; but, if they suggest my going to California, I shall respectfully decline.

I have been busy in my ward lately, — I have been watching by death-beds. Some of my men have died, they were so badly wounded. One of the last things one of them said was to call for me ; the surgeon had sent me to do something for himself a few minutes before. Two of them talked to me about their death before they went ; they were very quiet and peaceful. They died in the night after I had left them ; I cannot sit up all night, for I must rest for the next day. The night I sat by my men I had not my full night's rest. I must go to bed now, for it is late. I wish I could write all night to you, darling.

LETTER III.

Lawson Hospital, St. Louis,
January 29.

Dear Mother, — I have a few minutes to give to you. I am well except a head cold. Yesterday the wounded arrived from the battle of Arkansas Post, and some other fight. Thirty-one men were brought into my ward on stretchers, one more in the arms of the men ; not one can leave his bed. I was in the ward to

receive them. They seemed so glad to see me. As I was giving one a glass of water, another bent over and said, "It is real cheery now, to have a woman come round one, it seems like home." The hard hands clasped mine so gratefully. One poor fellow cannot feed himself; as I was giving him his supper he stopped to say, "God bless you!" He is so good and patient. As I went round the first day they turned to look at me as if they were longing to see a woman's face. There is one man who never catches my eye without a smile ready for me; he has lost one hand. We expect more men.

Mr. Hasard sent me a note yesterday, I opened it; it was my commission as nurse in the Western Sanitary Commission on board the steamship "City of Alton." I felt fairly caught. The head surgeon here could not quite understand my coming out here (I don't myself). He told Dr. Eliot, "These Yankees did astonish him every day"; he contemplated me with a sort of mild surprise. . . .

Oh, the water here! you cannot see through a tumbler of it; the Father of Waters is muddy in proportion to his celebrity.

Catch me thinking there is any place like home! I must go and look after my men now, so good-night.

LETTER IV.

LAWSON HOSPITAL, ST. LOUIS,
February 1, 1863.

I told some of my men to-night, when I was giving them their supper, that I had more children than the old woman in the shoe, and they were diverted at the idea. My life here is unlike anything I ever thought of. The head surgeon keeps asking me how I like it. I told him I was getting used to it. . . . . My men are so pleasant, and they seem to like to have me among them so much. This evening one poor fellow was taken quite sick; I did not happen to be in the ward at the time; and as soon as he was relieved he sent for me to tell me all about it. He said, it was good to have a woman about the ward, it made one think of home. He lay there clasping my hand tight, while he talked about home. Though I could give him no bodily comfort, he seemed to feel better for seeing me. I went to all the beds to see after them, — it seems hardly possible that a week ago I did not know one of them. I am so tired I must go to bed. I am done up and sleepy, and must be up in time to see that my men have breakfast at seven. If I ever come back home, I shall sleep for a week.

LETTER V.

Mississippi River, February 13, 1863.

Dear Mother, — I am going to keep a sort of a journal for you. I was in the hospital yesterday, when the door opened, and in walked Mr. Hasard to take me to the boat. I got into the carriage, and found the back seat strewn with articles for my comfort; a pretty scarf to tie over my head; hospital manuals for my edification; a bottle of choice brandy, in case of need among those on board, &c. He took me on board and left me. Such a scene of confusion and dirt, and soldiers! The ship is built up in all sorts of ways, to afford accommodation for the sick. We were obliged to start while all was in confusion, in order to reach the scene of action as soon as possible. If there should be an engagement at present going on at Vicksburg, we shall stop a little way above it.

The ship is getting into order. I have been in the linen and supply room this morning. The doctor took me there after breakfast; installed me in such a scene of confusion! gave me the key with the advice not to put things in order till he had sent up a quantity more! Last evening, after supper, we all assembled in a little cabin in the stern of the ship: there were eight ladies. I belong to the ship; two others remain to nurse on the passage up; the rest are to be sent on other boats. There were two or three gentlemen present with us. At nine one of them, a clergyman, proposed having

prayers : he first read the 14th of John, then prayed that we might be helped and guarded in the work which lay before us, and have the Lord with us. It was very solemn. I feel now as if I had really entered into the inner spirit of the times, — the feeling which counts danger as nothing , but works straight on as our Puritan forefathers worked before us. I do not mean that *I* am anything heroic, but I am understanding what it is to be in the army. I never before was among people who took it so seriously, because I never was where the war was around us, nor ever before was going into the midst of it ; and this makes us realize all that is at stake and what we are doing. Self has to be put down more and more, and the work before us must take complete possession of our minds : this is not easy, but necessary. You have no idea of the state of a military transport ship ; and, when filled with sick and wounded, it will demand all our energies to meet the difficulties in our way. We expect to be about five days reaching Vicksburg ; we are obliged to stop at the military posts in the way and inquire into the state of the river, as the guerillas are about. They attacked Island No. 10 again lately. We shall pass it. How little I thought, when reading the accounts of the battle there, that I should ever sail by it !

I write disjointed letters, for I am continually interrupted, and many things in my mind. . . .

Tuesday. — Our last orders are to go to Vicksburg. We are now at Helena ; look on the map and you

will see it. Imagine living in the midst of what the children call a "dirt pie," and you will have an idea of the condition of the people! We have several freed slaves on board, freed by the act of our President. One of the ladies heard them talking last night. One of them said, "The Secesh are mighty smart, but these folks are ketchin' up to 'em." Another came in with a pair of creaking boots. "Ah, Jane," sung out one, "your boots cry out of freedom." And so they keep it up. They are under my direction, and a funny set they are. I have an influenza, and the doctor ordered me to keep quiet to-day, in order to be ready for work by and by. So I am *trying* to do so.

Sunday. — I have been quite sick since I wrote. The climate brought on an attack, and the doctor ordered me to my bed. I am now getting over it, and much better; but the doctor has told me to keep still for the present, and one of the other ladies has gone into the linen-room to take charge of the supplies there. It is very cold there, and there can be no fire on account of the risk. I shall probably confine myself to nursing the rest of the time. The climate here is very trying at first: I am getting used to it. We are in full sight of Vicksburg, and have been watching the firing between the enemy and one of our gunboats. Our men are cutting a canal to get at the enemy by land, and the object of the enemy is to stop the proceeding; so they keep firing shells at our men, who are obliged to stop work and run under cover; and then, when the shell has exploded, our boat fires back and occupies the

enemy for a little while, so that our men get some work done. It is a curious sight to see a little cloud hover in the air, and know that it is such an engine; it looks very pretty if you can forget for a minute what it is. We look over at Vicksburg as you look at Boston from Brookline, and see it quite as well. It is built on a hill rising up from the water, and has a very pretty effect. We can see the breastworks distinctly, — long lines of red earth with cannon shining in the sun. The Federal army are encamped around us, tents away back among the trees, with causeways built up to travel on. The mud is terrific; I think it grows. I keep looking at my watch and wondering what you are all doing: first, I thought of you at church, now you are getting ready for dinner. I hope you are all well and happy. I wonder what you have for dinner. . . . .

Sunday week, Cairo. — My letter was interrupted by the arrival of the sick men. They were all *sick*, there having been no battle yet. We took on board about four hundred, many very sick ones. Between twenty and thirty died in the few days they were on board. They were mostly brought on board on stretchers. I saw one poor fellow assisted on board by his comrade; he helped him to his bed, and then the two rough men put their arms round each other, and with the tears running down their cheeks kissed a good-by as tenderly as two children. They neither knew when they would see each other again. The sick one told me afterwards, the other had been a real good

friend to him. There was another on board very ill with typhoid fever; watching over him was a fine-looking man. I was so struck by their feeling for each other that I asked if they were old friends. They replied that they had been comrades for several years, — they were old soldiers. You never saw any woman more tender of another than the nurse was of his friend! it was perfectly beautiful. They all seemed to feel for each other so much! I was giving wine one day to a dying man; it was all he could take, and I carried it to him every now and then as he needed it. I thought once I was giving him more than he wanted, and asked him if he wanted it all; he looked up: "Do you want to give part to another?" all ready to give up his last if another needed it. I told him why I asked. I suppose he has *gone home* by this time. They seemed willing to go. I went to one man to see what I could do for him; he was dying, and seemed in distress, repeating "The Lord have mercy on me!" I leaned over him and repeated the Psalm, beginning, "The Lord is my shepherd," — I think it is the 23rd: one of the verses is, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me." As I repeated it to him, he grew quiet and peaceful, and his trouble seemed to pass away: he died that night.

We started up river on Tuesday. When we left St. Louis we expected to go back there, but the government sent down word, or orders, that the sick should be taken to Memphis, and the boat return to Vicksburg

either as a hospital boat or as was needed. Besides the nurses detailed for the boat, six ladies came from St. Louis with us, intending to return as nurses on other boats; but there were no other boats coming, so they stayed with us, and well they did! Every one was needed. To cook for these sick and supply them was no light task. The boat reached Memphis on Friday. The men were disembarked as fast as possible. We ladies found we must return to St. Louis by a packet steamer; so went on board one at Memphis, and next found that the government had ordered this one to go back from Cairo to Vicksburg, — pressed into service. So *to-night* we take the cars, and *hope* to reach St. Louis to-morrow. There were many interesting things at Vicksburg, — the camp, the men at their various works. I was glad to see some of the Western generals. I found them very pleasant and cordial: full of anxious thought, but hopeful and *determined; they* may die, but they will not give up. We have some splendid men at the West here; I wish you could see some of them. I do not know where I shall be placed when I go back to St. Louis. I *know* one thing, — it will all be ordered rightly: all I have to do is to be willing to be led by One who is unfailing.

March 3. — I write in rather an abrupt style, but I write often when tired and can only write a little. You have no conception of the state of the boat when we left it. Hercules might have cleaned it, nobody else could; it was awful! We had no regular working-woman on board; only contrabands who have not the slightest

idea of neatness. The men on board were very homesick, — longing so for wife and children. One man told me he had a child married, and other younger ones : he was getting well, and all his thoughts seemed to be for them and seeing them. They were of all ages, some mere boys. I could not help thinking of their meeting in another life, — whether they will think of their comradeship here. There must be a strange mingling of influences, — the spirits who are attendant on the dying and the dead, those who are helping the living and influencing in their different offices of use. You do not know how much you are passing through at such times, till it is all over and you feel the reaction. I am glad of this two or three days' rest. I am struck with the immediate peace that repeating the Word brings to the men when in trouble ; it is almost unfailing, especially when they are dying. I am getting sadly familiar with death, — I say, sadly, for it is hard to have it come in such a way through this unnatural war. You feel that it should be the mother or wife's hand they should cling to, and not that of the stranger.

March 3, *St. Louis.* — After we got on board the return boat, it was ordered to return to Vicksburg from Cairo ; so we took the cars at the latter place and reached St. Louis yesterday. One of the ladies, Mrs. King, took us home with her. This morning I reported to Mr. Hasard. Where he will now place me I do not know ; there is a blissful uncertainty about the army. There is one thing I try to remember, — that we are in the hands of One who knoweth best,

and He will put me where it is best for me to go. If He sees it is best for me to continue in my work, He will give me a place, and if He does not, I shall pray to be willing to do just what He wishes. I am not allowed to work merely for the soldiers; my own discipline is going on at the same time, and I must be willing to accept whatever is really best.

LETTER VI.

MEMPHIS.

DARLING MOTHER,—I am on board the boat opposite the city of Memphis. Night before last we stopped all night on account of the fog, so had the advantage of passing the most interesting places in daylight. The Mississippi is perfectly magnificent. You cannot imagine such a river unless you have been on it; it is so grand and mighty, and such a mysterious river it is, winding in the most unforeseen manner in and out, now rushing through a channel not wider than the Charles River, then suddenly widening to two miles and more. Yesterday we stopped at Columbus; the fortifications make one shiver to look at them and think of our brave fellows scaling them as they did. I was shown the places where they went up and were driven back into the river, before they could, after repeated attempts, gain the victory. We passed many places that will always be memorable in our history.

Late in the afternoon we reached Island No. 10. I little thought, when I read the accounts last winter, that I should ever see it. There is a garrison upon it under the care of Colonel Asboth. The other night, four thousand guerillas made an attack upon it, but were driven back; so you see the garrison is a necessity. You cannot think how different being in the midst of the war is to hearing of it at a distance.

We steam under the yellow flag, and they do not usually fire upon that, so you need not be frightened about me; at any rate I am in the army, and like it. To-day we reached Memphis, where we stop till we receive our orders to proceed; if it is a clear night we shall probably go on, it is not safe in the fog; the river is a difficult one to navigate. We are four hundred miles from St. Louis. We have just heard that instead of going to Vicksburg we have received orders to go to Helena, and there load up with sick; how true this will prove we do not know, the order may be countermanded when we reach Helena. Do you remember the accounts we read of the fight before Memphis between our gunboats and those of the enemy? We are on the spot, and right before us are the bluffs where the people assembled to watch the fight.

I think of you often, but am not as homesick, quite, as I was. To-day is Sunday, and I am trying to think what you are about. Some of the ladies went on shore, but I must not leave my charge. We have some sickness on board among the men: one has diphtheria, but will probably recover, another has erysipelas, and

there are other cases. The cabin is being put in readiness for the sick, rows of hospital beds all along, all made up ready, and the ship being put in order gradually. I have just received one of our new laundresses, a contraband, with one pretty little boy; she wants to go to St. Louis, where she can get employment. When the doctor saw her he did not at first think of taking the boy; but, when he understood, he said to me, "The boy may come too." I wish you could have seen the poor woman's face. She says she has lost her husband: her boy is her all. She looked as if she would like to go down at the doctor's feet. There are many contrabands here.

I think I shall finish this to Carrie.

LETTER VII.

MEMPHIS.

DEAR CARRIE, — I was very glad to receive your very welcome letter; when one is as far away from home as I am everything is welcomed. It is so warm, we are sitting with the windows open; the climate is lovely. We are on our way down the river to take up sick and wounded. The soldiers are so glad to have a woman among them. I heard a funny story the other day with regard to it. At one of our outposts, the soldiers had not seen a woman for months. At last, the wife of one of the officers went to make him a visit;

on her landing, all the soldiers assembled to see her, they formed a lane for her, shouting, throwing up their caps, and acting in such a way generally that the poor woman was frightened and ran as fast as she could to her husband's quarters. It is curious sailing through the island channels here, where there has recently been such warfare. We may be going to Helena or Vicksburg, we do not know which. If we go to Vicksburg we shall stop above the city, but in sight of it. The hospital boats never take any part in the battle, or are fired upon as other boats are; the yellow flag floats at our mast-head to protect the wounded. I am fairly in the army, and, if my strength holds out, I suppose I shall be allowed to stay in it. You would be amused to see my commissions as *nurse*. I wonder what I shall do next. I have a little state-room all to myself. The doctor is very kind, and took great care to ascertain if I was comfortable. He has a lovely little wife, so I suppose that makes him considerate towards women generally.

Monday. Our last orders are, to go to Vicksburg. If there is an engagement going on, I suppose I shall see it. Our fleet are just above Vicksburg; we shall stop among the ships, I suppose. We are taking in necessaries. Last night we could not get men to unload the boat. There is a strong Secesh feeling here, and the men hid in order not to help us. The Provost-Marshal was out trying to press men. I believe he had to fall back upon the contrabands; poor things, they work willingly. You would laugh to see me

housekeeping on board the boat. I just sent on shore for some blueing to counteract the effect of Mississippi water on the clothes. I go from sick-beds to laundry, then to oversee another piece of work, then off to the supply or linen-room, as it is called here, to give out all sorts of things, then to tell one of my nurses what to give a sick man to eat, &c. This morning, we are marking blankets, to prevent their being carried off by soldiers and others. I do not know when we shall reach Vicksburg. We may be detained at Helena, or fired into going down; one of the hospital boats which has just come in says the rebels opened a battery upon her though she had the yellow flag flying. But mother need not be frightened. I like this kind of life, and I hope I shall keep on for a while. At any rate, the rebel shots are no more dangerous than diseases in the hospitals, tell mother. And, then, I am in the army. Can you imagine taking a sail, and keeping a look-out for the enemy's batteries the while; it is quite interesting. Hospital boats do not carry guns, they being non-combatants; but if the rebels came on board I would find something, if it was only the poker.

LETTER VIII.

St. Louis, March 7, 1863.

Dear Mother, — I am writing in Mrs. Chauvenet's parlor. I arrived in St. Louis yesterday morning about eleven o'clock. I thought I would go to Mrs. C.'s on my way out, and dine with her. I had the warmest reception, and in the afternoon Mrs. C. and I went out to see the doctor. Very glad he seemed to see me. I had a talk with him, and then came back with Mrs. Chauvenet. My room was not ready at the hospital, and the doctor waited to see which room I would have. Mrs. C. asked me, when I came, to visit her before I went out to Benton Barracks; so she seemed glad to have me come back with her for a day or two. I go out with her to the hospital this afternoon to see the doctor and talk over work.

LETTER IX.

St. Louis.

Dear Mother, — I have just been to Mr. Hasard to see if he had any letters for me. I am so longing for one. I have an idea you may be sick, because I do not hear. I suppose you have not yet received my last letters. None of mine could be mailed after I left Cairo; you living at home, have no idea what it is to be where war is actually raging around you. Every

thing is stopped or changed, and upset in the most unforeseen manner. When I went on board the boat, it was expected that she would continue to make trips up and down all the time, and I should remain on board. But the government has the boat under orders at Vicksburg, no one knows what will be done next. There are no more sick to be brought to St. Louis at present. I knew my place at the hospital was filled up, for the head surgeon only let me off to Mr. Hasard on condition he would send a good nurse to take my place. I did not know what I should do on my return; but Mr. Hasard wishes this. They are organizing a large hospital just out of town, and the head doctor has been to Mr. H., to tell him he wants a lady at the head of the female part of it, as supervisor; they have pitched on poor little me. I have, as usual, said I would do just as Mr. Hasard wished. One of the ladies who was on board the boat invited me to go to her house on my return; was she not *good?* She is Mrs. King, a lovely woman; I am at her house now. I go to this new hospital as soon as it is ready, — in a few days, unless Mr. Hasard changes his mind about me. Every one is friendly to me here, and kind. Mr. Yeatman carried your last letter down the river, expecting to meet me *there.* I shall get it when he comes home; I am longing for it. Mrs. Chauvenet called this morning, and was as kind as kind could be; she said she was anxious to see me, because, as I was a stranger here she wanted to ask me to come to her house, but I am at Mrs. King's. I feel I have friends

to go to now. They talk of the taking of Vicksburg; but, mother, if the talkers could see it! If it stands a siege instead of capitulating, it is fearful to think what that siege will be. I have been right in front of the city where I could see the fortifications and breastworks; the work of taking it will be awful. I never realized in the East what a war was. Now, I have been down to it, I have seen the camps as they are away from home, I have seen the work the men have to do, and talked with them, seen how they felt about it; and there will be no turning back. But I have also been with the wounded just brought from the battle, — such wounds as never come home to us at the East, — and I know at what cost the work is done, and how nobly, too, that cost is borne, counted as nothing if we can only win, and guard the old flag from harm. The cost is great; but in the lives of nations, like individuals, there come seasons when we must give up all. Here, side by side with all this noble stirring is the Secesh spirit contrasting with it at every turn; here, you really see the struggle between the two elements.

I went to the Lawson Hospital to see my old patients. I got a hearty greeting; they were good fellows, and I thought a great deal about them. The poor men on the boat, in all their suffering, were so good, so thoughtful of others: it was very touching. They were so glad to see women round them. They had not seen a woman for weeks and weeks. One of the ladies heard one of the men say to another, as she

went by, "Tom, is it not good to see the women round?" If those who object to women in hospitals could only hear the speeches that are made to us, I think their objections would be answered. As I bent over them when they were laid on their beds, hard hands were stretched out to clasp mine, and, "Oh, it is so good to have a woman come." It is curious, — the strongest feeling is always for the mother, her name first and last, usually; and when they were speaking of what we did for them, the phrase always was, no matter how old they were, "we had been like mothers to them."

This new hospital they wish me to go to, is out of the city, and has much better air, and healthier than in the city; it is in the country. If I go there I think I shall like it. But the question of liking has to be set aside, and that of doing our work where we are sent, substituted. My life at Fort Schuyler seems almost play work compared to this; but I liked it there, the sea air was so delicious.

LETTER X.

St. Louis, March 31.

Dear Mother, — Mr. Yeatman has just sent me your letter of the 25th, — accompanied by a packet of snipe and a quantity of rusks. He has joined forces with my doctor; they had a consultation up in

my room one day, which has resulted in my eating a *little* meat.[1] Mr. Yeatman sends me snipe with the threat that if *they* are not eaten — beefsteak shall be. He has also sent me the most delicious jelly, the maker of which, his sister, is coming to see me. Of course I am getting well, and you must not say I am "worn out," but got sick going down the river, as a great many do. I am glad I went; it was an experience, every way, I would not have lost. I long to be at my work: there is so much to be done. Mr. Yeatman, one day, wrote me a note of which I should like to repeat the last words. "You must try and regard *it* [my illness] as only a part of your schooling for the high and holy mission in which you are engaged." Now, mother, I feel sometimes as if I were not good enough for the work, and that was the reason it was taken from me for a time. I may need more discipline myself, and not be as really fit to work in the way I wish as I think I am. We shall see; I am going to try very hard, and keep my thoughts and actions right and Christianly, and then, if it is best for me, I shall have this work to do, or rather, be able to do it. Mrs. Chauvenet's neighbors have been kind in calling, and sending me jelly and blanc-mange. These river diseases oblige one to be careful. I have got ahead of mine.

[1] When this letter was written, my daughter was getting better from an attack of malarial fever. She did not habitually eat meat, or drink wine, or tea or coffee. I suppose she spoke of snipe, and in a later letter of tea and of wine, that we might understand she was entirely in the hands of her physician.

If the Lord sees fit to let me work, I think this will be a good place for me; but He knows best. I have just eaten one of my snipe, with rusk, and drank some wine this morning. I had rather have tomatoes and potatoes than either, but my little German doctor is decided.

When the letters miscarried, and I was three weeks without getting one, I was in despair. I got so nervous that the doctor told Mrs. Chauvenet my mind wanted helping as much as my body.

LETTER XI.

St. Louis, Easter Sunday, 1863.

Dear Mother, — I am thinking of you to-day, our Communion Day. I wish I was with you. I know you are thinking of me. Yesterday morning Mr. Yeatman sent me a basket filled with the loveliest spring flowers, wet with dew; I have them beautifully arranged, placed on a chair by me, while I write: they fill the room with their perfume. I am invited with the Chauvenets to his house to-morrow evening to meet General and Mrs. McDowell. I am not yet well enough to go out in the evening, — I am sorry. On my bureau stands a sweet little bouquet of heart's-ease, sent up to me the other day. The St. Louis gentlemen have the prettiest way of doing things. I am much better than I was; can go out into the garden, and am allowed to extend my diet *slightly;* for instance,

I was permitted a baked potato for dinner, beef tea, and a morsel of roast beef; after which latter enormity I am actually alive. Dr. Eliot is at the head of most of the improvements going on here in the educational point of view; attached to his church is a mission school for poor and forlorn children; I do not know that I should say *attached* to his church, but it is taught by the young ladies and gentlemen of his church; his son Thomas Eliot, is the principal of the school. You may imagine how much good such a school must do. Dr. Eliot is also working for other schools and for the University, heart and soul; he has the most wonderful persistence, never giving up. He has done a great deal here for education. I feel quite impatient to be at my work again. I hope this work is for me. My cough has gone; that is a relief. Those violets you sent were lovely. What a woman you are! I keep them in the letter. I hope to have another letter to-morrow. You speak of feeling afraid you repeat yourself in your letters. No matter if you do; I read them over and over, so it amounts to the same thing. I feel very quiet and contented now. I have learnt a great deal during my sickness, and I think I can feel willing, or try to feel so, to let the Lord do what he pleases with me. Give my love to all.

LETTER XII.

St. Louis, April 12, 1863.

Dear Mother, — I have waited all the week for a letter to answer, and have concluded to wait no longer.

The box arrived yesterday; to-morrow I am going to have it opened. It was marked "from the McClellan Club." The interest *that* excited among the young gentlemen at the Sanitary, and their remarks, upon being made acquainted with the history of that highly distinguished body, I shall relate to Sabra when I tell her the history of the box. I am quite well now. On Friday, Mr. Yeatman took me out to the hospital I am appointed to, to see the head surgeon, *mon chef*, — and make my arrangements with him. It is called, the Benton Barracks Hospital. It is out of the city, in an enclosure of fifty acres, formerly used as the scene of the Horse and Cattle Fairs held here. The great amphitheatre has been made into a hospital. Then there are other smaller hospitals in the grounds, for different classes of patients. The whole number of beds will be two thousand. They are not all put up yet (the beds, that is). It is a very large and fine hospital. I wish you could see it. The different buildings are large and well arranged. After taking me over them all, Dr. Russell told me what he wanted of me. He wishes me to be the lady supervisor of all the nurses, male and female, I myself taking my directions from him; as he laughingly told me he should not allow any one to scold at me, he should reserve that privilege for himself. He was in earnest however; he is as particular as any general, and all his officers have got to mind their duties as well as they can. I hope and pray that I may have understanding and strength to do mine properly. I never expected such a position as

this, — of so much responsibility. The supervisor sometimes has to overlook all the women, cooks, laundresses, &c; in a large hospital like this, that would be impossible; the housekeeping is here a work by itself. At Fort Schuyler the ladies had a special kitchen; they will have one here, I am very glad of it. It did a great deal of good there, and I hope will in this case. My *quarters* are in a large house just outside, opposite the gate. This house is occupied by the surgeons, *supervisor*, and the lady who has charge of the linen-room. We have a dining-room where we all take our meals together, head surgeon and all, and a pleasant parlor where we can see our friends. Some of the surgeons have their wives with them. Mrs. Forbes is the housekeeper of *this* establishment; it is like a large boarding house, only under arrangements to suit the occupants. This is to obviate the necessity of the doctors' seeking board where they can. The Doctor said he wanted to make it as much of a family arrangement as he could. My room is rather small, but comfortable, a pleasant window looking out on an upper piazza, a good bed, table, washstand with china, stove, rocking-chair! common chair, straw carpet. I hope my hours in it will be tolerably peaceful. I should prefer, as far as my mere personal feelings were concerned, my one ward at Fort S. quietly to myself, but I feel that I may be of more use in this position, and I would rather be where I can be of the most use. My various experiences have prepared me for it, I hope, and for one thing, I believe that all we do is overruled, and I should not

have been placed in such a position without any seeking of my own, unless there had been some good reason for it,— some use which I could rightly perform there ; and having been so sent there gives me hope that there may be in me the fitness for such a charge, if I seek to do only what is right. That is sometimes very difficult. The Doctor wants me there as soon as I can come ; I expect to go out on Tuesday. The Doctor seemed very desirous that everything should please me ; he asked me two or three times over if I liked my room. I hope this will be something permanent, but I do not feel as if I could look forward one week ; I have had so many changes, and we live in such a time of change. Mr. Yeatman took me a very pleasant ride, showing me some of the forts ; St. Louis is protected by ten forts. It was threatened by Secesh at the beginning of the war, but General Lyons and the volunteers saved the city, and, through the city, the State. Mr. Y. gave me a very interesting account of it. We passed the old rifle-pits, built on the sides of the road to command the approaches to the city.

LETTER XIII.

Benton Barracks Hospital,
April 19.

Dear Mother, — I have only just received your letter of April 9. I cannot think why it was so long coming. I suppose you will have my long letter

to Sabra a day before this reaches you. This morning was a very busy one; it was inspection day. Sunday is the day appointed. I thought that while the M. D.'s were going the rounds I should write to you; but, no, the Doctor tranquilly informed me that he wished me to accompany him. I was to be in the first ward he entered and join him there. I began the day as usual, with a visit before breakfast to some of the wards. After breakfast, again in the wards, looking after nurses and seeing how the sick were doing. At ten, I was awaiting the Doctor. The form is this; the wards are put in perfect order; then, when the Doctor comes, the steward enters and commands, Attention! All the men who are able rise and salute the Doctor and suite. So we go through all the wards, kitchens, and dispensaries. We wound up today by getting into an ambulance, as many as it would hold, that is, and went over to Benton Barracks, where there is an army hospital, of which our Doctor is superintendent; I have nothing to do with it. There are not many sick there. After we came home the Doctor said to me he wished to have a long talk with me about my duties. I felt something as I have done on entering a dentist's room. We had our long talk, and he defined my work exactly; he says I have a large field to work in, and so I have, it almost dismays me; indeed, it would quite, if I did not hope I should be guided and protected. I will tell you how my work is laid out. I have direct and complete control over the female nurses, I also direct all the male nurses; I do the

latter work mostly through ward-masters who are here simply head nurses. They have the care of directing all the cleaning of the wards and changing the patients' linen. I tell these men what I wish to have done, how I wish to have it done and when they are to see that it is done; I tell a nurse myself if necessary. I see that the wards are kept clean and properly arranged, &c., &c. I have now to train the female nurses; they are to give all the medicines, see that the special diet patients get all they are ordered to eat and that it is properly served out to them; and to watch the patients and do for them whatever they require. This I have to teach them so far as they do not know it, and they have not generally much experience. I was sent in town by the Doctor to-day to see Mr. Yeatman about more nurses. I passed some time looking over a list, and selecting from it those who appeared suitable. I have one nice one in the amphitheatre in one of the new wards, whom I like very much; I put another in to-morrow; I have been regulating one very nice ward, and have the nurses working well. The surgeon told me he was very glad to have me there. To-morrow, I expect —

Tuesday. — Are you used to my stoppages yet? This morning I went as usual into the wards, and found so much to do at once that I did not get back till breakfast was half over. Then out again to the wards, seeing to this thing and that. The place is very beautiful, though in summer very hot, the Doctor informs me that the mosquitoes have bills immensely

long, regular Sangradoes. I am now in search of a suitable man to be my orderly; his duty will be to follow me round and do my errands; the difficulty is to find one *strong enough*. One of the ward-masters informed me that he would not undertake to follow me round, for I seemed to be everywhere. You need not send me a lantern: I have one, and go about evenings with it slung on my arm. My evening visits are important ones. One of the men who died here the other day interested me very much. I sat by him some time the evening he supposed would be his last; when I got up to go, he bade me good-by so touchingly, holding my hand in his poor trembling ones. I wonder whether I shall ever meet these dying ones again. I have watched by some I should like to see again bright and happy. This is a curious sort of life and there is one thing trying about it; every night when I review the day I see something which I could have done better, or ought to have done differently. It is rather discouraging to see one's self so far from being just what one should be, or near it. I am improving, I hope, and I am certainly learning. I hope I shall be able to discharge the duties rightly. This afternoon I had to give a reproof to a ward-master for doing something without my sanction, which he ought not to have done. I do not know which felt the worse, he or I. I have a new nurse to train to-morrow, she looks pleasant and good.

Wednesday. — The new nurse has come; I have set her to work. I wish I had a set of nurses who knew

just what to do, and would take right hold ; however, all can learn.

Dr. Russell says he knows Dr. Wyman and also Dr. Bowditch, very well ; he himself is from Natick, Mass. ; his family are there now ; his whole name is Ira Russell. As he is the head here, I thought you would like to know of some who are acquainted with him. It is very interesting here: I am beginning to love the place very much. I made a short tour with the Doctor this morning, which resulted in more work for me. Mr. Yeatman says he wrote to you last week ; he was so afraid you would send for me : what he said in the letter I do not know, except that I was out here. I have been very ill from malaria. I actually grew thin ; one friend told me I looked peaked ; so I got to the glass to see, and I did. I am quite well now, or I could not work as I do. My little room is very pleasant : I have some lovely flowers on my table, from Mr. Yeatman's garden ; they are the flowers you have by and by. I have been giving several of the caps the Club sent on, to soldiers who had neuralgic pains in the head : they were very much pleased with them. The pin-cushions excited great interest ; they are all appropriated. The bandages have already come into use. A box of anything is acceptable. I was interrupted by the arrival of a new nurse ; I have taken her to her ward, given her general directions, and left her to domesticate. Then other business ; I was about so much this morning I am resting a little while.

I wish you could see this place and the men in

it; there are more coming out; I suppose we shall by and by have two thousand patients. Some of the men are sinking; it is sad to see it. They are very good and patient, but so subdued sometimes by their long suffering, it is very sad; you have no idea of the weariness produced by long, sad sickness away from home and woman's care. The peculiar sort of submissiveness it causes is like that of a poor tired child who wants somebody to take care of him, and is too weak to do for himself. When you see it in a man who should be strong and well, it is very sad. The men are beginning to care for me; as I stop at the beds as I go round, the hands are put out to take mine, and I must hear how they are, and say something to them. One poor fellow who did not get his strength was too sober to be enlivened by anything, till I remarked very gravely, "I was very impatient for my children to begin to walk," the idea struck him as so comic that he laughed right out, and became quite bright. One has to think of all sorts of things to say to them.

LETTER XIV.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
April 21, 1863.

Who would have thought a few years ago, that I should be the superintendent of a hospital, teaching nurses. Truly, the world turns round funnily.

22d. — My letter was stopped by my aching eyes. This afternoon I was obliged to write a letter to a widow whose husband I was with when he was dying. I wrote once, and in her answer she asked some questions which I answered. I think I will enclose the letter that you may see what sort of letters we receive. To write these letters is one of our saddest duties.

LETTER XV.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
April 26, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER, — Should you like a letter from me? I am very busy now, but find time this morning. The Doctors have finished inspection. I asked the Doctor if he wished me to accompany him usually; he said not if I did not wish to; he had wished it the last Sunday, that I might see how everything looked, but he did not care about it. I was rather relieved, for it is quite a public affair. Yesterday we received one hundred and fifty more men from Memphis. They were very glad to get here. There are some very sick ones among them; as they came, I was in the wards, to see if they were properly prepared for them, and to speak to the men as they came in. I got so tired seeing new faces, my head fairly ached; you have no idea how it affects one. It is not the mere seeing; I speak to each one, they tell me what is the matter with them, and in that way I get the run of the ward, and can

direct the nurses better. One man is very ill with heart complaint. I saw him this morning as he was recovering from a very trying attack; I sat down by him and talked with him; he told me that he thought he was dying when he was so ill: he seemed very much affected.

Monday evening. This has been a fatiguing day. Before breakfast I made the tour of the wards, that had female nurses in them. After breakfast, round again. I have to observe whether the nurses are at their posts and doing their duty, if a patient needs his face bathed, water compress on his head, another pillow and change of position, or flannel wrapped round him, &c.; if the nurses have not seen to it, call their attention and show them what ought to be done. Then I have to look after the ventilation, see that windows are properly opened and that the wards are clean and attended to in season; if they are not, speak to the ward-master, or report the ward; see that the special diet is properly cooked when it comes up, and served in season; if not, report the cook. I report to the head surgeon every day. To-day two new nurses came; I had to place them, and see to their room. It being Monday, I had to make out a weekly report of the nurses, — female nurses, — the ward-master sends in the report of all the male nurses, that is, of where they are when entered, by whose orders, &c. This is done every Monday, and any change or new nurse coming in the week reported at once.

I wrote a letter this morning for the poor man I

spoke of the other day; he says he trusts in the Lord. He told me he thought he was dying, and he seemed tried at the thought of dying here. I told him how the Lord cared for him, and how he was waiting to take him home just as he himself would take a little child, for we were all little children in our Father's hands. He said he knew it, and looked comforted. He asked me to write to his wife, "that he was trusting calmly in the Lord." We hope he will get his discharge and go home.

Tuesday morning. I was so sleepy I had to stop and go to bed, and now I must stop and go to the Doctor. . . . I had to arrange some details with him. For one thing, the nurses like to sit in their room a little while in the evening. The hospital rule is, all lights out at nine o'clock. I told the Doctor the nurses needed more time, so the rule now is, all nurses' lights out at ten. As their breakfast is at six, that is none too early, the Doctor says. I like the place very much, it is very pleasant out here. I hope I shall not have varioloid; we sent away ten cases this morning to the small-pox hospital. I had been over them every day since they came in. Poor fellows! they looked sadly when they had to be dressed and changed to another place. I found a woman with her baby sitting on one of the beds the other day; on stopping to speak to her, she told me that her husband, whom she was sitting by, had never seen his child before that day. It was five months old; he was holding it, and looking at it, as if there never was a baby before. He could not say much, but

I wish you could have seen his face. The child was a beautiful boy. One of the ward-masters has a brown cat of which he is very fond; he is quite an old man, and puss seems to supply the place of family. How do you think she begins the day? With a glass of egg nog compounded for her by himself; I suppose he thinks it beneficial. A hospital is an odd place, all sorts of things meet and come out. I hope to hear from you soon. . . . I am longing for letters. . . . I wish you could see how good and patient the men are. Most or many of them begin the day, after breakfast, with their Bibles, when they are so weak they can hardly hold the book. They turn to it for strength and support. It is very touching when you know their days are numbered, to see them in pain and trouble, clinging to this comfort; and such a happy thought that they are soon to read it in joy and gladness. The lady nurses are very kind to their men, and are a great comfort to them; the Doctors find the wards where there are lady nurses get along so nicely that they are all anxious to have them. They keep asking me when they too shall have ladies in their wards. Mr. Yeatman says he is going to send out twelve more between now and Monday, and there will be more by and by. The amphitheatre alone takes twenty; we have nine now; these new ones will make twenty-one; we shall probably want about thirty.

We are going upon a new plan in some respects, and it takes a great deal of thought and care to adapt things and people. I like *young* nurses; they are more willing

to follow directions, more energetic, and stronger; so I asked Mr. Yeatman to furnish us with such. I do not want old women in the wards, unless they are trained, habitual nurses, that have always kept up to the mark. We have about twice, or more than twice, as many male nurses as female. The acting corps of a large hospital like this is immense, take it in all.

Evening, I went out to the wards this afternoon; found things to attend to. The wards are so large that we have more than one female nurse to each. The wards in the amphitheatre are so very large that we have, or shall have, four female nurses to each one. I assign them each a quarter and see that they keep in it. The male nurses are also assigned, one to each quarter. I found some men very sick to-day. I think we shall have more deaths soon among them. I was quite struck by the feeling shown by the men to their comrades on many occasions. They are good to each other.

The other day, one of my female nurses came to me, and informed me she was married the day before to the bugler! It seems they were engaged, and thought, to avoid the remarks his visits might occasion, they had better be married. So I marched over to the doctor with this little item. He was very much amused. The lady has been sharing a room with three other nurses. I told the Doctor I thought he would have to provide for them, and he has given them a room to themselves, into which they moved to-day, to the great delight of the bugler bridegroom. Everything here is military. The gates are guarded night and day by sentries, and no

soldier can go in or out without a pass. The cavalry are frequently passing to and from the Barracks beyond the hospital. They are very picturesque and effective as they go winding in and out among the trees. The calls are blown by a bugler; every now and then the soft tones come floating on the air, most poetically stating that dinner is ready, &c. The Doctor is very good and kind and thorough, and everybody else has to be thorough too. I hope I shall have strength and wisdom given me to do this work rightly. I love it very much, though it is so arduous.

LETTER XVI.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
April 30.

DEAR MOTHER, — I have just finished my evening round, and am going to try to keep awake long enough to talk with you a while.

This afternoon we had a very interesting scene. One of the buildings is a circular one, to be used as a hospital when we fill up quite; in the mean time, the Doctor has given permission that it should be used as a chapel. This afternoon we had a meeting in it, Dr. Eliot presiding. The beds were placed in close rows and used as seats; a pulpit, lent us for the present, on one side, a harmonium by the side of that. I went over with the Doctor, after making my report

of the wards to him. I should like to have had you see the interior; the pulpit, with Dr. Eliot's beautiful gray head above it; in front, row upon row of Sabbath-school children, who came out to sing to the soldiers, some ladies who came from the city, and all the rest filled with soldiers, crowded; their weather-beaten, worn faces, that had watched for the enemy month after month, in the battle-field and on the lonely picket, now turned towards him who preached the Word of the Lord, giving words of help and comfort to those who were in need of such strength and cheer. He spoke to them of the war; he said it was a Christian war, for we were fighting for the Lord's cause, his freedom and right. He took for his text, "He who loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." The children began by singing a beautiful hymn, beginning "Am I a soldier of the Cross!" Then there was a prayer, then another hymn, then Doctor Eliot's address. I wish you could have seen the soldiers when the little children were singing: they are most of them fathers, their little ones far away. After Dr. Eliot, the children sang "Marching along."

After the benediction, I had to make my afternoon tour of the wards; seeing that men were cared for, that nurses did their duty. I hope I shall not fail in mine; I feel as if I had to watch myself more than anybody else. After supper, seeing an old woman who wanted to see me; in the evening out to the wards to see that the night-nurses do their duty, that

the men are comfortable. I have to remind the nurses of things continually and do things myself. I found one of my men, who I think is dying of consumption, sad and weak. I sat down by him, and read to him the 103d Psalm; he seemed to feel it very much, and looked up so gratefully for the good words. What should we do without them? There is another man in the same ward, sinking the same way. I was reading to him this morning.

Friday morning. I have a few minutes before dinner for you and me. I was out this morning among the wards, visited them all before breakfast; *my* breakfast was late, I admit. After breakfast out again; one thing and another to attend to, direct or do. In one ward, where there was no female nurse, I found a poor feverish patient, the cloth on his head all warm, the heedless men nurses not thinking of it; I got ice-water, bathed his face and then his hands. As I worked over him, I looked up at him, and he was watching me with such a look. I left him more comfortable, with a cool, wet compress on his head and quiet in his face. And so we work on, here a little and there a little. The Doctor is very kind in his intercourse with me, — explaining things in my work, advising me how to do, and how to act with others, and to them. He has a great deal of tact himself. It is a great help to me to have such a person to act with and guide me. My position is an arduous one.

I wish you could see the caps you sent on, on the wearers' heads; one tried on three, and at last pitched

upon the least pretty, but he thought it becoming. One of the men got a cap of black velvet trimmed with red; he came to me in great dismay, to say that the men told him it was Secesh, and would I give him something blue to pin on; so I have made him a blue knot, and shall take it to him this afternoon. There goes the bugle! so I suppose we shall have dinner soon.

Afternoon. A new nurse came just now, a widow, who seeks consolation in nursing. I suppose she thinks fifty men will console her for one. I hope they will. I have assigned her a pleasant ward. Have you any good advice to give me? Let me have it if you have. We have just had a delicious shower, it cooled the air so refreshingly. A thunder-storm is as good as an ice-cream on a hot day. I want my German Ollendorff and Key. I need them here.

LETTER XVII.

Benton Barracks Hospital,
May-day, 1863.

I am better than I have been; my cough is very slight and I am stronger. For some time I had coughed very badly with a sort of intermittent fever every other day. I did not give up work for it, but am very glad to feel more comfortable, and more able to work. Our hospital is in fine condition. The new

nurses take hold well and are interested in their work; in the colored wards the nurses are teaching their men to read, write, and, in some instances, to cipher. The poor colored men are very grateful and so anxious to learn it is very touching. There is one colored man dying of consumption. His great longing is for *cake*. I take him some every day. I was a little late yesterday; he asked the nurse where that woman was who brought the cake? She told him I was coming, and said, "Which do you like the best, the lady or the cake?" Well, he said, he liked the cake the best. We were quite amused by his honesty. I have been busy to-day in all sorts of ways, and to-night am tired, as I always am; but then I sleep well. Two of my nurses are sick, one with measles, so I have that on my mind in addition to my other cares. Think of coming eight hundred miles to have the measles in a hospital! I dreamed last night of being at home and laying my head on your lap. It was *nice*.

I think my poor men care for me, and perhaps I shall not be obliged to live to a lonely old age; I may be allowed to pass into another life when my work in this way is done. One of my nurses told me, the other day, that she had a young brother in the army. He was at the taking of Fort Donelson, in the thickest of the fight, his comrades falling all around him amidst a perfect hail of shot, and he escaped without a scratch. He told them he thought *then* that it was his mother's prayers that were saving him, and he believed now that they had saved him all through. Was it not a beautiful thought?

Going through the wards the other evening, I saw a man who appeared to be in trouble. I went to him. He was weeping like a child over the picture of his wife and babies. Poor fellow! he will have many a homesick feeling before he gets through. I comforted him as well as I could, and when I left him he appeared to feel a good deal better. Home-sickness is the worst sort of sickness.

LETTER XVIII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL.
May 4, 1863.

I AM busy now overseeing and teaching new nurses. Dr. Russell was speaking to me of my work, the other day, and said how great the responsibility was; it is something I have to answer for very humbly and carefully. The Doctor is very good, and very much beloved here. I like his strictness; it is right; but it obliges one to walk very carefully, and that is what we ought to do.

Yesterday, I sat down by a dying man, dying of consumption, and read to him a beautiful Psalm. He enjoyed it very much; he always does; he wanted me to stay with him. I had promised to go with one of my new nurses to the afternoon meeting here, so I went back to him after it; as I sat by him, fanning him, he said: "I wish I could go to meeting, I always

liked it." He will soon go to a meeting from which no bodily infirmities will keep him.

My cares and duties gather daily. Every day I see more and more to be done or done better by myself, more duties towards others.

The men are some of them very pleasant, giving me a kindly welcome as I go, the hand put out to take mine as I come to them. There is something that goes to your heart in those rough, worn hands, that have carried their guns through many a hard fight for our country, and are right ready to carry them again. Now they are worn with disease, fighting with pain and sorrow, surely we ought to help them in all ways. I am going now on my evening rounds; I find things to attend to always.

Evening. I have been round the wards, reading to some, fixing pillows for others, seeing that nurses are in their places. I went into one large ward, of which the ward-master is a very nice old man, and found the men on their knees, for the most part, and the ward-master offering up prayer. I wish you had been there. A sick ward is at all times of night a peculiar scene — this was very impressive. I shall always feel better in that ward; they have prayer every night. This morning was very sultry and hot; to-night it has cooled off, and the men are better. . . .

I have resumed my white caps, they are very convenient. I heard to-day that one of the German soldiers was inquiring who that lady was, — "she wore a little white cap, looked like a German, and spoke to

him in German." I am afraid he was disappointed when he found I was not a country-woman.

LETTER XIX.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
May 10, 1863.

The bandages are in use, some of them. The flannel shirts are more useful than one can imagine who has not seen them used; so many of the men have chest and side pains, leading to consumption. I think if the ladies could see the good their work does, it would be more than return for all they have done. It did my heart good to take out the nice clean articles one by one, and think of the poor suffering forms they would render more comfortable! "Oh! I feel better!" they say, after putting on a good flannel shirt. The men who have come to-night are quite sick; some bad cases, I fear. I have been round among them. . . . I went after their arrival, and again to-night. They got here about one or two o'clock. They were refreshed by their supper, but weak and weary. You have no idea how our soldiers live. I am so accustomed to living among them, that I do not know what I shall do when I return to civil life, if ever I do. I am inclined to think I shall follow the army for a profession.

Tuesday. — I am afraid the preceding letter was rather broken up, but I was dead tired, and could hardly write at all. It is very warm here, and the

heat tires one. I see its effects on the men. We have about nine hundred sick, and a number of convalescents besides, whom we are sending away. We are expecting to fill up every day or any day. This place is better for the sick than the city ; I wish you could see it at night. It is a curious place, — this great Coliseum building lit up, and all the smaller ones, as I go about the grounds at night, all alone with my lantern. It has a curious effect ; I can hardly realize it all, or that I am at the West. I shall never love any place as I do the East. I wonder how Cambridge is looking. I must not think much about it, there grows up such a longing if I do, and I could not enjoy it if I left my duty to do so. . . .

My dresses were very acceptable, I am so hot. The two new dresses are lovely ; I cut one out this afternoon. I have to rest a little sometimes, for my feet pathetically represent that they are made of flesh and blood. The ginger I can testify to from personal experience. I was delighted with everything ; I kissed the handiwork of my friends. When I looked at the hat, it looked so like sister Sabra that I kissed the bows she had made.

Tuesday. — I have come in from my night patrol tired and wet, so I have put on a dry wrapper, and am ensconced in my rocking-chair. A new nurse came to-day, a lady about forty. Her husband is off engineering, or something like it, and she wanted to do something for the soldiers ; so she has turned nurse. . . .

The window shade you sent me is going to one of the dining-rooms, to do duty as table-cloth! I made myself a short cotton shade.

LETTER XX.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
May, 14.

DEAR CARRIE, —. . . I have just come in from my night rounds. I went to the prayer-meeting to-night; it was very interesting. The men sing well, and you should hear the army hymns from their lips; they are grand sometimes. To-night there were present two of the missionaries, who go among the soldiers to teach them. One of them went down the river when I did; he used to hold prayer-meetings every night. They were solemn out there on the Mississippi, passing we knew not what dangers, and going to meet others. I did not dare tell mother when I went, she would have been so anxious. The river navigation is very dangerous in some parts now, and probably will be till the war is over. To return to this missionary, — he gave an account of his last trip down the river. I will give a part in his own words.

[There follows an account of the painful and sometimes perilous experiences of this and other missionaries. This narrative might not be without

its own interest, but has nothing to do with the writer's work, and is omitted. The letter then goes on.]

I tell you all this, Carrie, because I want you should understand the many sides and inner life of this war. Side by side with the heroism in the field that we read of, there is another heroism, grander, more courageous, working for eternity.

The men want to be told these things; they care for them, ask for them. I was reading the other Sunday morning to a man; when I had finished, one at a distance beckoned to me. I asked him what he wanted. "Won't you read me a chapter, too?" I read to him, too, and he seemed so pleased. They are dear, good souls, some of them. One very sick man has been very low-spirited lately. Two days ago his wife came to see him, bringing a beautiful little daughter he had never before seen. Oh, he was so happy! He is very weak: I am afraid he will never be much stronger. He sits on the side of his bed, holding his baby's little hand in his, and the wife sits and looks at them both. He told me that his oldest child told the mother not to come home without papa. They want comforting in many ways. I have such a curious variety of cares: all sorts of things are continually rising to the surface like bubbles, and I am expected to settle all. I keep clear of all cliques and intimacies, — it is lonesome, but necessary; for I must take sides from feeling, nowhere. Some things are rather puzzling to deal with.

I think I shall have some idea of character when I am through with this work.

It is a life of hard work, and uncertain work : you never know one week where you may be sent the next. I have gone wherever I was asked since I came here, and nearly killed myself, — though I do not mind that, —and now if I get my strength back, I shall keep where I can use it, and not, by getting sick, become of no use or comfort to anybody. We must have our bodies in good order, if we want to do for others. I bought myself a passion-flower the other day and have trained it up by my window; it makes me think of home. I can hardly realize the quiet state of Cambridge. The excitement here about Vicksburg and the river news is very great. If there is much fighting at Vicksburg, it will fill up the hospitals, and we shall have our hands filled with work. Tell mother she must tell the ladies the men are delighted with their dressing-gowns. I give them to the sickest, and they wrap themselves up in them so comfortably!

LETTER XXI.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
June 5, 1863.

I am rather busy now; I have to look after refugees, contrabands, soldiers, both black and white, and keep my senses. I have no immense work to perform, but many

duties, and I hope and pray that I shall perform them in the right spirit and faithfully. The comfort of many depends in a great degree upon me. I wish I had a little stronger body, that I was a small Hercules for instance. I wish you could have seen the face of one poor white soldier as I was bathing him the other day. I do get such sweet words and looks sometimes. The world may not think I do much here, but the poor men like to have me round. . . . Dr. Russell takes care of me, that is, all he can; work I must. The thermometer is rapidly rising. I do not think above 90 yet, but there is a prospect of tolerably warm weather.

LETTER XXII.

Benton Barracks Hospital,
June 7, 1863.

Darling Mother, — I got as far as the above, and now, June 11, am going on with the letter. I received yours of June 2. I was so glad to get it, I wish there was more of it; and yet I do not know that any amount would satisfy me. I have been very busy lately. The demand for nurses is on the increase, I have written to some, and shall write to more, under Dr. Russell's orders. We shall want surgical nurses: one of our best nurses is going down the river. The excitement here is very great; I shall be glad when Vicksburg is taken, and this terrible news of battle is

over. The amount of wounded is already very great, by and by they will be coming up the river. . . . It only takes a little time to order meals, and we now live very comfortably; I take my meals alone, at a later hour than the nurses; they breakfast at six, I at seven, after I am through my morning first round; they dine at twelve, I at one; they take tea at four, I at six, after my afternoon walk of inspection. All our nurses are ladies. I do not believe it would be easy to find such a set of nurses in any other hospital. I have to keep careful watch over every one of the nurses, as I am responsible for them, and a good deal it involves. I have to look in many different directions. There are not many patients here now; they are being drafted off to make room for the sick and wounded when they come; those here being most of them convalescents. We have a lesser round building, called the *rotunda*, which will be for surgical cases, as also will some other wards. These great buildings are called wards, then subdivided into divisions, and nurses assigned to each division. They will hold a great number of men.

Sunday afternoon. I have just come from Communion. It was given in the rotunda, now used as a chapel. It was all very plain, and somehow, from that very reason, made me think more of that "upper chamber" so many hundred years ago in Jerusalem. There were soldiers and women present, weary men, some just able to walk in, all intent on the solemn occasion. I saw one man walk in leaning on his cane,

and wrapped up in one of the comfortable wrappers you ladies sent him and others. I was glad to see him there; a month ago he was next to death. Some time since, one poor fellow got his discharge; he was far gone in consumption, he had been wearing one of those wrappers and seemed to enjoy it very much; I told him he might take it home with him; he was poor and will be very thankful to have something comfortable to wear as he sinks away in the disease he caught while fighting for his country. I hope to have more nurses in soon, before the sick and wounded come up the river; we shall be full then; our hands will have enough to do. We send off all that we can to convalescent places and camps. One ward has decreased from one hundred and thirty-seven to thirty-five or six patients, I tell the nurses it is only resting time and they must make the most of it. They are not allowed to go out of the grounds without my permission. Two of them came to me just now, and I sent them off to walk in the woods; a little while after over came another, with a friend, to know if she might go. I hope they will have a good time: it is a lovely evening.

The other evening I attended a prayer-meeting and was very much interested. One of the speakers took for his theme the necessity of coming to Jesus now, and illustrated it very forcibly. Many of the men present were under marching orders and will soon be before the enemy. The preacher specially addressed them, reminded them that it was the last time they would stand there: would they go into the field and not

take Jesus with them? He asked, what would they do without him there, sick or wounded, or passing forever into another life; where would they go in that life if they did not take Him with them in this life and follow His commandments by leaving off all sinful ways and turning to Him. One feels a good deal when seeing men thus addressed who are going off to the battle-field. I tell you, mother, we realize war out here: it is at our door. I have been very much interested in one of the wards here. Back of this house I live in is a ward consisting of two long rooms: it is the erysipelas ward. When there is a bad case of that kind it is sent here, and the disease is held in great horror by many who fear taking it. When Dr. Russell came here in early spring, these patients were scattered about in out-rooms and not properly cared for; he had these two rooms, which were barracks, turned into the erysipelas ward. There was no woman in there to keep things nice; no one hardly would go in or near it; it was looked upon as a sort of Botany Bay among the wards. I went in after I had been here a while and got my duties under head-way elsewhere. I found the wards dirty: no whitewash, old wooden bunks, mattresses that had not been changed for a long time; everything requiring renovation. I passed some time there, then went over and asked the Doctor to let me have the ward arranged like the other wards. He told me it would not do to order one of the lady nurses there; I told him, "no, but I could go myself." He asked if I did not fear taking it, I told him if there was risk it was already

run, for I had passed about two hours over the worst cases. He laughed and finally gave me permission to go in and do whatever I pleased; did n't I go! I found a German Doctor who did not understand neatness, and who was going away; I waited till he went, then a skilful Doctor possessed of Yankee neatness joined forces with me and in we went.

We revolutionized the place. We got in an army of whitewashers, for lime is a disinfectant; while the new Doctor superintended whitewashers, I went to the head surgeon, and asked for clean furniture: he kept his word and said I should have it. So, going from one place to another, I got in iron bedsteads, new mattresses, pillows, bed furniture, mosquito nettings; had the tables and cupboards washed; lime was put in boxes on the floor; the Doctor had the beds arranged in two files, each side of the room, two feet from the wall, so that every part of the floor is exposed and there is no excuse for not washing every part; everything is now as clean and nice as any other ward, walls and ceiling whitewashed, the floor clean, and order generally. The next thing I wanted was a lady nurse; I could not order one there; so I kept on superintending myself, but that was not enough. I longed for a volunteer nurse; I concluded at last, if one did not present herself, I would pray for one. I went over to the wards in that state of mind, and one of my best nurses informed me she should like to take the ward! I brought her over, installed her, and she says she is happy. The men are so glad to have a woman about all the time. Yesterday

they dressed their ward up with evergreens and improved it very much. As the ward nurse informed me last night, it is going to look as well as other places. I look upon the nurse of that ward as a heroine ; I wish I had time to tell you all she has done elsewhere. Her name is Miss Melcenia Elliott. I am using the money Mr. S. sent me to buy fruit for this ward ; they need it very much, and it is doing them a great deal of good. I take all the flowers I can get to this ward : they make the air so pleasant. I would write better; but it makes my eyes ache, so I cannot. It is very hot here, but we have the Mississippi ; my respect for this useful stream increases daily. There was an octagonal house here of one room, lately vacated, I asked the Doctor what he was going to do with it ; he told me he would give it to me, and I should have it for myself, if I wanted it ; I suggested that it would make a good parlor for the lady nurses to see their visitors in. The Doctor liked the idea, and said it should be done ; it is doing and will make them a very pretty room. Love to all, and hope that I may be able to go on.

LETTER XXIII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL.
June 15.

DEAR MOTHER, — I finished one letter to you yesterday afternoon, and am going to begin another. We had a funny scene in one of the wards last week. One

of the orderlies came over in great haste for the Doctor of the ward; he was not in, so over I went as fast as I could. Lucky I did; I found the man on his bed, he averring he felt as if he had a fish-bone in his throat, the nurses insisting he had diphtheria, on the strength of which they were wrapping the throat in flannel and preparing a hot foot-bath. I did not see any signs of diphtheria, but there were signs of choking. I sent for another surgeon; he came; had the man put by the window-light, and pulled out a fish-bone, tightly bedded in his throat. Would not the foot-bath have been beneficial? Neither the Doctor nor I could help having a hearty laugh.

I like being here, it is very pleasant now. I hope I shall have strength to continue and wisdom to do right.

Wednesday. We are impatient for our new patients. Nine hundred sick and wounded were carried to Jefferson Barracks, twelve miles below the city, this week. Our turn will come next I suppose.

It is play-time just now, compared with what hospital life usually is; though a person unaccustomed to it would think we had plenty to do. In one of the wards, the nurses went to work and made a handsome flag, which was hung with appropriate ceremonies, and a speech from the surgeon of the ward. One ward has got a new design of evergreen ornaments, large stars; they are very pretty. They have great pleasure in fixing up their wards in all sorts of ways, some not in particularly good taste. I have a new *attaché*, a white

poodle, belonging to the cook of the nurses' dining-house. Poodle has thought proper to become attached to me.

I wish Sabra would go to the Massachusetts General Hospital and see Mrs. Mudgett, give her my love, and ask how she does; then write and let me know; also tell me how Joanna Welsh is, and remember me to her.

Some of the men here are quite sick, some dying. There will be plenty of that by and by, I fear. I shall be glad when I, too, am called home, but I want to be of use while I stay. I wonder whether I shall ever sleep in my blue room again.

LETTER XXIV.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL.
June 21, 1863.

YESTERDAY we received a number of men from Memphis — poor, sick, and wounded fellows. We are booked for a thousand more, I suppose, from down the river. I went from man to man, to see that they were provided for, had something to eat, &c. One poor fellow was utterly forlorn, too sober and sick to eat; I got for him a mug of milk, crumbed a cracker in it, fixed him up in bed on a rest, and got him to eat. When he was all arranged, he looked up and said, "This is the best place I have seen since I left home." And he was but one of many I had to go to in the

same way. Two poor fellows had their jaws shattered by shot; they could not eat, and I had some mutton soup for them; they were so glad of it: and so on from one to another. As I went my rounds among them this morning, I stopped to ask one man how he did; he wanted to show me the picture of his wife. "Ah!" said he, "money would not buy that of me!" Then he told me he had something more to show me, and took out a card with eight braided rings of hair, his wife's and seven children. I told him I guessed he was glad when they sent him that. "Was n't I!" and such a look at it.

I wish you could see the hospital now, it is lovely; there is a pretty fountain playing before the entrance, and such trees, and hardly any caterpillars. I told the Doctor I did not care for the thermometer as long as the latter did not appear.

You have no idea of the difficulty of keeping discipline in this place with all these women. I think sometimes of — I won't say what. I am obliged to keep a firm hand everywhere, and a quiet one too. It is sometimes the most wearisome part of the work, and I shall probably have between thirty and forty soon. I have hitherto found it as much as I could do to manage one woman.

Please write me more and oftener, it is all I have. Love to all.

LETTER XXV.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL.
June 24, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER,—I sent off a letter to you this week, do you want another? I thought of writing last evening when I came in from my rounds, but I was too sleepy. I little thought, when I inspected my ward at Fort S., how many I should have to look after. We are still expecting patients from down the river. They cannot come up quite as fast as we wish they could. I only hope I shall have nurses enough when they come. I have just been on my afternoon rounds. There are some very sick men here. One man had a bad attack of chills and fever. I ordered him a flannel shirt. He did not want it next his skin, but I insisted, and he was shirted. I could not have him sick. Then others had to have on thin flannel shirts and bandages. The last are necessary and very useful, in chronic troubles. I went to the city on Monday, I think I told you. I have been eating black raspberries lately; did you ever see any? They are very good, though not so delicate as the red. Some of these poor fellows are very forlorn; homesick, and cannot get home.

Thursday. Did I ever tell you exactly how I make my rounds? I start in the morning early, and see how the breakfasts come up, and if they are properly cooked, and sufficient in quantity. Those of the men who are convalescents eat in the dining-room of the ward, then

the sicker ones are on what is called *special diet*, that is, articles of food specified for each man, and adapted to his particular case. The nurses have the charge of giving it out. I see that they are doing it properly. Then I eat my own breakfast, for which I am quite ready. After breakfast, I put my room in order. I am obliged to do all my own chamber-work; we all are. Then out I go again. I for a particular inspection of patients, — whether they are taken proper care of by the nurses, need any nourishment they have not had, flannel bandages, or chest-pieces, or shirts (as particular cases of illness come on, they need a different style of wrapping), look after my nurses, and see to a few other little matters. Then other things are apt to come up, if there is much to be attended to, keeping me busy till dinner-time. After dinner, I generally rest a little while; when the wards are filled up, I do not suppose I shall be able to do so. Then out again into the wards, looking after all sorts of things, suppers included. Then my own supper, then out into the wards again; a little later, looking after night nurses, seeing that the sickest have their drink for the night, enough pillows to rest their heads upon, and the wards properly ventilated. When all is done, I feel like going to bed. My bed is a straw one, and none of the softest, but I am quite oblivious of the fact; I could sleep on the soft side of a plank. I had some blackberries brought me to-day for the sick. I never tasted any so nice; this hot southern sun ripens them to perfection; the sick were very glad of them. I have had more

money given me to purchase fruit for the sick. I wish you good people at the East would send us some green eye-shades: they are *very much wanted*. I made my rounds last night after the lamps were down; I had to see after sundry things, — ventilation, night drinks, &c. You have no idea what curious places these immense wards are at night; they look even larger than in the day-time; they are more like something you dream of than anything you would expect to meet. As I go up and down among the rows of beds, looking after the sick, I see so much patient suffering, pain quietly borne that a neighbor may not be disturbed, comforts done without, lest the asking should disturb some one. It is one of my duties to see that they have these without the trouble of asking. I gave one of Mr. Silver's tracts to a soldier who had lost his arm; I hope he will like it. One of the surgeons went in a great hurry to Memphis to take care of the wounded. As I was helping him pack, I gave him a packet of the tracts, and asked him to distribute them among the soldiers. He said he would.

Saturday. The sick and wounded are at the city; our ambulances have gone in to bring them out. I must go over to the wards to see that all things are in readiness for them.

I have been in the wards. It is now nearly half-past five. The wards are ready. I have assigned the nurses their quarters, seen about the moving of some of the men, to the rolling of bandages (my roller comes into use now), also sending fans I got from the Sani-

tary Commission to the different wards, and so on, with odds and ends. I have been on the move nearly all day. I am very tired, for it is very hot. I came home to take a foot-bath, and am going out again in a few minutes.

This morning I was a little amused. I was just going home to rest a little before dinner, when one of my nurses came to me to say that one of the men in her ward had a bad nose-bleed. They could not stop it: what should be done? I went over, applied the proper remedies, and stopped the bleeding. He had a black silk string tied round his little finger to stop it! I wonder what I shall hear of next.

Sunday afternoon. The sick have not come yet. The boat they were on was passed in the night by the "Minnehaha," who reported she would be in about ten or twelve; so our ambulances went in, but have not yet come out. It must be a terrible day for the sick. It is very hot. We are ready for them — nurses at their posts. Last night, as I had finished my rounds, there came along a woman and her baby, after nine at night. She had just arrived, and was in search of her husband, who was among the lately-arrived sick. The clerk looked over the register, and found out where he was, sent her round, and he was woke by his wife and child! This morning I found him with his baby in his arms, trying to teach it to put its arms around his neck, the mother looking on. It is very hot here, and my room is very hot. The Doctor talks of moving me over to the cottage where he lives. There is a large, cool

room there which he says belongs to me, in my character of supervisor. I want a smaller room in the nurses dining-house, as I think it more convenient. I tell him it would be big enough, as neither I nor my dignity are immense; he laughed, and held his own opinion. Where he will put me I do not know. He seems to intend taking good care of me. I do wish the sick would come, it is so much easier to make them comfortable when they come in the daytime than when they come at night. They will be glad of a good, clean bath-room, clean clothes, and beds. They are so glad to escape the jar of the beds in the boat. The engine shakes them very painfully.

They have been making a flag in another ward this last week. It is a very handsome large one, has been hung in the middle of the ward. It was first hung out of the window, that the world outside might know that they had such a thing. I found a man fairly sinking under home-sickness. He said he did not want a discharge, only a furlough that he might see his wife and children. I represented his case to the Doctor. He said if the man could get well enough to do some light work out-doors, so that he could be sent into the invalid brigade, he could have a furlough; so I went round to the man, told him about it; he has been mending ever since, and tells me he is now able to do some light work. So I am to report him to the Doctor accordingly.

LETTER XXVI.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,

July 3.

DEAR MOTHER,— Our sick men came on Monday, and glad they were to come, —four hundred and sixteen; then some more since, soon many more. I went round among them looking after their comfort as well as I could. They were from Vicksburg and Milliken's Bend; they had not seen a woman for a long time, some of them. As I bent over one he said "It is a long time since a lady had her hand on me." He seemed so glad to be spoken to, and so were they all. You cannot think how touching it was to see them watch for a greeting and a touch of the hand. The men who were bearing pain without murmur would look up with a lip quivering like a child's and eyes full of tears. My nurses were all ready at their posts; as one of them bent over a sick man he caught her hand and pressed it to his lips, and they all had some way of showing how gladly they felt the womanly sphere around them. As I stop to speak to one, I see the heads of the others turning and watching me, waiting till they are spoken to. They are very shy of claiming notice, sit very gravely till I speak, then the whole face lights up, and the rough worn hands are held out. I have a peculiar feeling about the hands that have bravely carried a musket for the old flag. And the wounded too, —you cannot help feeling differently about such wounds

from any others. One of them had a badly wounded hand. I told him he would be very proud of it by and by, "Yes, indeed!" was the reply. They most of them have pictures of wives or children or some one as dear. They like to show them to me. Many of the new-comers found friends here, and there were many greetings among them. The men are very patient. Dr. Russell told me, that once off in Arkansas, as he was taking care of the wounded after a battle, he came upon one terribly wounded; he remarked to him, "This is a hard case, my dear brother," "Yes," said the soldier, "but — pointing upwards — it is all right up there." There is a great deal of that feeling among the men. I asked a boy the other night, if he remembered to say "Our Father" every night as he did to his mother at home. He replied "Yes, ma'am," with such a pleasant smile. I wish his mother could have heard and seen him.

It is evening; I have just come in from my night rounds; there is a thunder-storm, but I cannot stay at home for thunder-storms. Excuse my writing, my eyes are tired, and I must write when I can. To-morrow there is to be a great celebration for the soldiers, in honor of the Fourth. The ladies of St. Louis have got it up; I hope the poor fellows will enjoy it, but many are too sick to do so, and I must endeavor to comfort them up. There is to be a dinner, &c.; this rain will cool off the weather and lay the dust very conveniently. It is hot here. I asked the Doctor the other day, if the ladies could have a bath-room for

themselves. He offered me the use of one in the rear of the office. I thankfully accepted, to-day I made use of it; though the water was muddy it was cool: oh, how I did enjoy it! I took the ladies round when they were at leisure, and they were very much pleased. The wards have very fine bath-rooms for the soldiers; it is a great luxury; my respect for the Mississippi increases daily. When new patients come, it is the rule that they must take a bath before they put on their clean clothes; then each man has a clean shirt and drawers and socks, and can go to bed or sit up as he pleases. The poor fellows come out of the boat so dirty and weary, they look like new beings when they are refreshed by their baths and good food, and it is so pleasant for them to be released from the crowded boat jarring on their poor nerves, hot and unavoidably dirty. No one who has not been on a hospital boat in care of the sick can imagine what it is. It is the most arduous of all the forms of nursing, in every respect.

LETTER XXVII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
July 4.

DEAR MOTHER, — This is to go with my two other sheets. This morning out came the ladies to see about their dinner. The great rotunda by the side of the amphitheatre was for the soldiers from a distance, from

other hospitals and camps; our own soldiers had their dinner in the dining-rooms of their wards; the ladies setting the tables and waiting upon them; each set of ladies had a ward assigned to them. The tables were very nicely set, flowers in the midst; one vase had a great pyramidal spray of yucca; it took me straight home. Oh! you cannot think what a longing comes over me sometimes to go over the house and garden and see you all. I cannot allow myself to dwell upon it: it would unsettle me. I shall stay here while I am wanted and can be of use. When that is no longer the case, I will try to find work somewhere else. It is not so much matter where you work, as *how* you work.

But to go back to the soldiers. Their tables were covered with good things; there were hundreds and hundreds of men fed at them, and all seemed pleased. After dinner there was speaking from a stand in the large grove, and singing. Finally the different detachments formed into order and marched to their hospital homes and camps. One man just off a bed of severe sickness, told me he had never missed a Fourth of July in his life and he must go. I told him I thought it would do him good, and he went. One of our old patients, a German, seemed very glad to see me; when I bade him good-by he took my hand and kissed it. I used to pay him a good deal of attention when he was here. The old men and boys touch me the most. I should like to have you see this place in early morning: it is beautiful. Very hot, but I find I can survive

it very well. Everybody tried to frighten me, but I do not approve of that kind of soldiering.

LETTER XXVIII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
July 5, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER, — I posted a letter for you yesterday, telling you about our *Fourth*. It does not seem to have hurt anybody here. Mr. Burnell, the army missionary, who was on the boat when I went to Vicksburg, came to see me this morning. While talking with me he took up a copy of Mr. Silver's tract; he looked at it, and asked me if there were many of them printed. I told him that was the last I had, and gave it to him. He knew before that I was a Swedenborgian. Now can you send me out a number of these tracts, and a number of the short New Church tracts or little pamphlets? There need not be a great variety, but many of each kind, if you can. You have no idea how much we can do for the Church in these times. Men's minds are opened as they never were before; you would have to be among them to realize it fully. I am summoned to one of the wards, and must stop for the present.

July 6th. — Twenty years ago to-night I broke my ankle. What a poor little sufferer I was then! Time flies, does it not? I went over to the wards yesterday,

in the midst of my letter. One of my nurses was sick, and sent for me. "Oh!" said she, "I thought I should die if you were not at home to come to me." I worked over her till she felt better; then travelled on my rounds, got through the afternoon course, and then went up to Mr. Yeatman's in the ambulance with the doctor. We both wanted to see him on business; I about my nurses, and it was pleasanter going then than in the heat of the day. We were asked to stay to tea, but could not, for the doctor had business to attend to, and I had to make an evening visit to very sick men. So we drove home as fast as we could, and I started out with my lantern, like Diogenes or Guy Fawkes, whichever you like. As usual, a little to attend to here and there. I wish I was wiser and better. To-day I was talking to one of the men, and I told him one of the uses of sickness was to make us think about the Lord and religion. He told me he thought so, that he had never thought much about such matters till he was sick, and now he thought of them. I talked to him about it then, — how little real matter it was if the body suffered, if we had spiritual health and the peace of God, — and this very sickness brought him nearer to that than he could have been without it. He agreed to it all, and seemed glad to talk about it. When all outward help fails, they want something more, and they find they cannot stand alone.

Evening. — I have just come in from my night rounds. The night is a little cooler, and the men feel better for it. I have been round looking at the

sickest men, seeing that they have what they need. I get so many kindly hand-grasps as I go my rounds. One poor sick boy does not like it, if I do not speak to him every time I go round.

July 7. — I have finished my morning rounds, and have a few minutes: do you want them? I should like a good New England east-wind; it would be perfectly refreshing, the air is so sultry to-day. I do not think the heat here so hard to bear as it is with you; it is not such a dry heat, not so burning, but neither is it so healthy. I get along very well, and drink as much water as I want. I suppose I have got through my acclimatizing process; I hope I have. The men seem mending: we are ready for more.

Afternoon. — There is immense excitement, — news that Vicksburg is taken! One of the principal streets of St. Louis is lined with flags. We shall have sick and wounded enough now.

LETTER XXIX.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
July 8.

DEAR MOTHER, — . . . . The news about Vicksburg is confirmed, and all are duly excited; being on the same river brings it very near to us. The river is now open, — but I tremble to think at what a probable cost. It is extremely hot here, and must be still hot-

ter there. *Thousands* of men are wounded and sick: I hope we shall have them here. Our men are convalescing fast; that is, the greater part. We have over a thousand, sending off as fast as we can to convalescent camps and hospitals, to make room for the newcomers: we shall be very full. This is what we have been waiting for; till Vicksburg fell, they could only send a limited number of the sick; now all will be sent that can possibly be moved, either here or to Memphis. It is not so healthy there as here; therefore as many will be sent north as can be; they travel on the boats in beds quite well. I wish it were not so intensely hot; it is hard for the sick, — this month and August will be like a fiery furnace. I am glad I am here, able to do something. As I told one of my nurses this morning, it is of no use minding the heat; we must make up our minds in the beginning to bear it this month. August and September are very hot; but in September we have some cool days, and the nights are then cooler than the days, which is a great comfort after working all day. Winter will come before we know it. I am drinking new milk for supper now; that has done me good; I buy it at the *sutler's;* she keeps a cow. I have what the calf does not want; I am afraid he does not love me. . . . Is not the news all around good? Lee in retreat, or cut off, which is still better, and here, this long and trying siege over. These were the two points on which so much has depended lately. I do not think you realize the immense importance of the opening of the Mississippi. It alters

the position of the whole army of the West, and gives the greatest blow to the rebels. It was their stronghold; and they clung to it with a full knowledge of the fact. The Rebel general, Garnett, was the husband of one of my nurses; she saw his death in the papers this morning; she told me of it. He ran away from her with some one else, disposed of his property so that she could not get any of it, — they were wealthy, — then entered the rebel army. Now he is dead. His wife is a beautiful woman, I should think about twenty-five. She has clung to the hope that he would return to her. She is obliged to do something for her support, I understand. This is a hard world to some. The losses have been very heavy on both sides; many officers gone. My other nurses had relatives at Vicksburg; one other a husband, others brothers and friends. I have to try and help patients and nurses both now. I hope help will be sent to us if we need it. I found in one of the wards a strong man of forty, — his lip quivering so he could hardly speak to me. His son was in the fight, and he has not heard whether he is alive or dead; and so it is, all round.

One of the boys here is very ill; his father came to see him, and found him asleep. When the boy woke there was his father by his bedside. You may imagine the meeting! The old father sits by the bedside fanning him, and he lies with his hand on his father's knee. There is an old man here who has been running down for some time, and so homesick! A few days ago his wife got here; there was a general rejoicing over her in

the ward; we were so glad she had come to him. The nurses congratulated them both; it has done him real good. There was another man here very ill, growing worse daily. I wrote to his wife to come to him; and one day when I entered the ward, there she was! I got a warm greeting from her. She brightened him up, nursed him as only a wife can, night and day. I let her stay in the ward, sleeping in the lady nurses' room. He by and by began to mend, and was well enough last week to go home with his wife. If he gets well I do believe it will be due to her; I think she saved his life. Is not that a happy thought for a wife?

Talking of other people's homes makes me think of *my* mother. I am very happy here now, and I think people like me tolerably well. I should like to be here till the war was over; but I do not know where I shall be placed or sent. I am not quite acclimated yet; little things hurt me. If I could have been well and strong at Vicksburg, so as to be as useful as a surgical nurse, as I know how to be, I should have gone there three weeks ago; as it is, I am more useful here, perhaps more so at any rate, for I have a great deal to look after, and I try to do all I have strength for. My position brings me into many pleasant relations with others. I have no time to accept the courtesies offered me; but it is pleasant to think I am thought of and cared for. More than one house has been opened to me, with the request that I would consider it a home at all times, especially if I were sick. So I shall not

feel so forlorn again as I did when I came up the river sick, and thought what a little fool I was to come West, where I could not keep well and do my work. I have got well, and work as usefully as I could anywhere. I think I work easier because I am so much thinner; they call me here "the little lady." . . . Caterpillars have come, but I take them among all other exigencies. I think of sending you a collection of the insects that enter my room, either by flying or walking, only I should probably be obliged to send it by the freight train. They vary in *size*, but *all* bite, except the flies, and they go down your throat if you open your mouth at all. I speak from personal experience. I want you should be sure and tell me if father has his yacht this summer. I do so hope he has. I wish I could see a good large fish for old acquaintance' sake.

LETTER XXX.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
July 12, 1863.

DEAR MOTHER, — I have wanted all the week to write to you, and hope I shall now succeed. On Thursday many more sick came, mostly wounded. It was a very hot day, and we had our hands full. As I went from ward to ward, I could not help thinking how many there were still unhelped. I found many so exhausted they could not eat. I had a quantity of

broth and soup provided, that they could *drink*, and it did them good. If they can be brought up from that first stage of exhaustion, it is a great point gained. After I thought all provided for, I went for some dinner myself; then back to the wards again. As I went through one ward, the surgeon of it, Dr. G., told me that there were several wounded carried into two other wards, and that the surgeon of those wards was off in the city! (I think he heard of it afterwards.) You may imagine I was in those wards in about five minutes, and commenced examining the wounds. Soon, over came Dr. G. himself, to my great delight. He gave his directions, and the men were made comfortable as possible. One of them will lose either the whole or a part of his hand. There was no female nurse in the ward he was in, and the Doctor of the ward was not to be compared to the one who went over with me; so I wanted to have this man and one other up in his ward. I went over to Dr. Russell, and asked him if they might be transferred. "Certainly," was the reply. I had the worst case put on a stretcher and carried over. The boy was placed in a nice bed, every thing arranged right around him, and a pleasant nurse watching over him; he looked like another being, he was so happy, he fairly laughed. It was *very* hot, and the wards were really uncomfortable. I went to every one after supper, and had shades taken away from windows; they were opened as much as possible, and every ward watered profusely, like the streets, with watering-pots; it makes the greatest possible dif-

ference in the temperature. If you would go without a carpet in your drawing-room and water it well, you would find out! Finally I went to bed in a room like an oven. Since then we have been busy enough.

The city was brilliantly illuminated yesterday, and music and flags to give it all due *éclat.* I did not go in, for Dr. Russell did not think it best for the lady nurses to go, as there was no one to take care of them, and I did not think it right to accept my invitation after being obliged to say no to them. So I staid at home. We had an afternoon celebration out here. Some of the employés subscribed, and procured the services of an excellent band. The Doctor ordered an excellent dinner of various good things, and had a platform erected in the grove, and seats carried out, so that the men could celebrate it in their own fashion. About eleven, the band appeared in an open car decorated with flags, and drawn by four horses. They drove into the gates, preceded by the provost-sergeant on horseback, playing the national airs. In this style they drove slowly round all the hospital buildings, then to the stand. After dinner, we all went down; the ladies had *reserved seats* near the platform. The Doctor was on the platform, but the soldiers had the meeting after their own fashion, and the speaking was very good. You would be surprised to hear how well the soldiers speak. They fear nobody, and speak in the most graphic manner.

Richard's death surprised me very much. He was a dear, good boy, one of the pleasantest I ever knew. I

have become so familiar with death that it no longer affects me as it once did. I have got to thinking of it as I do of my friends continually setting out for this place or that. The other world seems very near, at times. I have been with a dying man to-night; he was very quiet. I said the prayer to him; he seemed very much pleased; said "That was good." He held my hand clasped in his all the while I sat by him.

I am busier than ever, I am happy to say, and they seem satisfied with me. I shall work as long as they give me anything to do. I should no more think of giving up than my brother Chauncy would. I am so glad I can be of some use too; it is a great comfort. I hope now that I shall always be doing as long as I live. When my power to do ceases, I want to go.

I expect five new nurses this week or next, and more by and by. We can accommodate twenty-five hundred patients now, if required, and we shall fill up fast; we have not many over thirteen hundred sick, besides convalescents in the invalid brigade. I get confused sometimes with so many faces, as I go from bed to bed.

My bandage roller is over in one of the wards, doing daily work; it is a most useful little thing. If the ladies wish to send out something very useful, I wish they would get us some of the iron bandage rollers they have for sale at Metcalf's, Tremont Row. They are cheap, and very serviceable; they screw on to the table. I merely make the suggestion, as a way in which a little money would go a great way. You can

hardly think how necessary they are in a surgical ward, where they are constantly rolling and unrolling bandages. Lint is wanted; scraped lint more than thread. I understand that the city hospitals will, some of them, be closed, and the sick and wounded sent here; also we expect them up the river all the time, as fast as they can be moved.

LETTER XXXI.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
July 19.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I suppose you are sitting down to dinner just now; I wonder what you have got. I am busy as ever, and with a prospect of more to do.

We expect many more from down the river. I am so glad it is opened; there is such rejoicing over it; you have no idea at the East what the Mississippi is to the the West; it is the ocean, the great highway of commerce, as well as a great thoroughfare.

I wonder what I shall do with myself when the war is over; I never can sit down and do nothing. I expect seven more nurses this week. We have about sixteen or seventeen hundred men here, many of whom are to be sent off, either home or on discharge, or back to the regiment or to convalescent camps.

You would be very much interested in some of the men here; I read to some of them as I go round, and

they listen so attentively, making such thoughtful, good remarks that it is very pleasant.

Afternoon. It is very hot this afternoon — sultry and close. Mr. Yeatman has received forty bottles of choice brandy from Boston. Shall I ever see the dear old crooked town again? I like the West, — its large, free life, its magnificent river, and generous-hearted people, opening hearts and doors to you. I should like to have you see it.

I never expect to *live* at home again, I shall always be working somewhere or other, I hope. Work is my life. I cannot be happy doing nothing. I must go out to the wards now.

Evening. I have come from my night round. I have visited many, read to a few, talked to others. I wish you could see the hands stretched out to mine when I go round. The other day a man showed me the ambrotype of his wife, and told me he had lived with her twenty-four years, and had the first cross word to hear from her yet; I thought that was a wife worth having. Yesterday, as I was passing through a ward, a woman came in very quickly, ran up to a bed on which one of the patients was sitting, and flung her arms round him; it was his wife. I wish you could have seen the meeting. I did not see her face, only her husband saw that. The color all went out of his face, and she, woman-like, immediately began fanning him, doing something for him at once; that is our women's proper way; we were sent into the world to do good. One of our best nurses is going to Vicksburg.

Mr. Yeatman applied to me for her, and I felt obliged to let her go. I went in town with her to make all necessary arrangements for her. This is a queer life, in all its phases. I had a supper of ice-cream to-night, in town; I hope I was not extravagant, but I did want something besides rations; it was *real good,* as the children say.

LETTER XXXII.

I BOUGHT myself a *pair* of birds; I would not care for *one.* I like to hear them talk together. I got the prettiest I could, and the prettiest cage; they make me feel quite at home; you do not know what a comfort their little voices are. I have a passion-flower, a most beautiful variety, and it blossoms in my chamber; a lemon tree that I planted; it has four leaves! I feel at home for the present. I wish I had time to write more.

LETTER XXXIII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
August 9.

DEAR MOTHER, — I suppose you are at home by this time and ready for a letter from me. I am busy as ever. Our good Doctor — Dr. Ira Russell — goes home this week on a furlough of twenty days. He says he

shall try to go out to Cambridge and see you and father; now if he comes please do all you can for him; he has been a most kind friend to me, instructing me in my duties, supporting me on all occasions, and taking care of me in the kindest manner. He is very anxious to see his wife and children and so takes this furlough. A surgeon from another hospital takes his place while he is gone. I am desired to keep on, so suppose I shall. I shall try conscientiously to do my work, and then if it does not suit I shall feel that I am not to blame. It is hot here now, but I do not mind it, I feel better than usual in hot weather. Your boxes will do great good, the soft linen was exactly what we wanted, the bandages also. Every thing was needed and gladly received; the cologne was very refreshing, this hot weather it is doubly needed. I wish I could see you for a little while, — would not we talk? I should have so many questions to ask. Is there anything new in Cambridge? I wonder whether I shall be lonesome when I get to Heaven. I mean to go there; I must be where there is the Bible and little children; I hope I shall have the care of little children by and by.

I stopped writing to go and see a dying man; he was peaceful and quiet though a little wandering; there was the most beautiful presence, or sphere, around him; the good spirits must be very near, close and ready to help. It always seems to me when I think of it like a birth in this world, when all are ready to welcome and meet the new-comer. If our spiritual

sight were opened what a beautiful sight we should see! — all those waiting spirits and their tender loving care. I feel a little homesick to-night, but if I were to give up my work and go home I could not be happy, so I must be thankful I am here.

LETTER XXXIV.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
September 10.

DEAR MOTHER, — I thought you would like a letter from me. They say they shall never let me go down the river again. They seem to think I am worth keeping alive. We have among our nurses one little woman whose husband is at Vicksburg, and since she came here her little child died. It was brought to the hospital and she took care of it here; it died in her room. I was with it when it died; the poor mother sat with her head buried on my shoulder; she could not look on. She was very much overcome. I repeated to her the Lord's prayer, and that quieted her. I sent for the chaplain, and we had the funeral service in the chapel. I got a quantity of delicate flowers, and they perfectly covered the little thing with them as it lay in its coffin. I have been by many death-beds; but this was the first by a little child. The mother is still here; she wished to remain. I can hardly believe the summer has gone, it seems to have flown by; the autumn begins

to show itself, leaves falling and autumn tints coming; it is very warm here still; our warm weather lasts till late. I suppose you have my copy of the rules. I thought it would interest you.

The hospital is working on as usual; I am doing my part steadily, and appear to suit; I use all my strength and I can do no more. I may as well do this as anything else; I cannot fight, but I can take care of the fighters. There is a young man here who has been through eleven battles and is now shot through the chest. I am afraid his life will not be a long one. These chest wounds are very dangerous things; I had rather see a man wounded almost any where else. Just a little hole, perhaps healed up and the hurt inside; a little more pain, a little harder breathing, and weaker and weaker day by day; so they go. I have some curious experiences by their bedsides. I shall never be able to settle down into a do-nothing life again; I shall want to work while I live. I have not been very well this summer, though the heat has not troubled me. I have never been so well as I was in the early cool days, but I feel better and I am evidently getting acclimated, but it takes time. I can drink the water, and have had neither the chills nor cholera. My habit of cold water bathing is a great preservative against disease.

I wish I was not deaf, I am afraid I shall never be reconciled to it. Please tell me the news at home. What is going on, who is in Cambridge and who has left; whom do you see of the inhabitants? I had a

letter from Susan Dixwell with a charming photograph of her club and her piazza; it made me homesick. Only think; the seasons have come round, the flowers come and gone, and I have not seen them. Please send me a dandelion or clover from your lawn in your next letter. How I should like to see some of my friends unless they have forgotten me,— out of sight out of mind is very apt to be true. My birds are lovely and a great comfort to me. Do write soon; I am contented to stay now, and thankful for the work.

Soon after this letter was written my daughter's health began to fail. In autumn the malarial diseases of that region are prevalent. She became seriously ill, and at length it was determined that she must return home. She left St. Louis in October, and when she reached Cambridge, was carried from car to carriage, and from the carriage to the house. Her health was gradually restored, and she thought herself well enough to resume duties, and returned to St. Louis, reaching that city on March 3, 1864.

LETTER XXXV.

Benton Barracks Hospital,
March 12, 1864.

Darling Mother, — I was so glad to get your letter yesterday. I wanted to answer it right off, but had

not time, there was so much to do. My head fairly ached, so much coming into it all at once it could not quite hold it all. We have many patients here, very sick men among them. All sorts of sicknesses, and I am sorry to say, small-pox still appears. We had four cases in one ward to-day; they were removed to the small-pox hospital on the river. No small-pox cases remain in this hospital for treatment. We have the erysipelas cases however, and that is about as bad while it lasts. We have twenty-six cases of this alone; the other sick count by hundreds. There is one ward where we have colored women and children; it is very funny, the queerest little pickaninnies!

I had a very pleasant visit at the Chauvenets; I came out and saw the Doctor every day, and went over nurses with Mr. Yeatman. I came out finally on Wednesday; my baggage came out the next day; I have my old room, neatly arranged and every thing I need.

There are a great number of frost-bites in the hospital. The negroes lay in the woods and fields in cold weather while escaping from their masters. The foot of one man is off nearly to his ancle; but he is bright and cheery: freedom seems to be the main thing. I had a great many warm greetings from old friends; I hope I shall be able to be of use here yet.

LETTER XXXVI.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
March 16.

DEAR KITTIE, — I thought you would like to hear from me once in a while. I am busy among the sick, both colored and white. The white are pretty sick, but hardly so much so as the colored. We have had many cases of the small-pox and erysipelas. I found a case of small-pox and one of varioloid this morning the first ward I entered. The poor man with small-pox looked up so sadly at me as I covered him up. The colored people are very grateful for all that is done for them. I have a great many smiles as I go round among them. We are trying to train colored women as nurses among the blacks; it is a difficult task, but one worth trying. We put them under white nurses, two or more colored women to one white nurse. In regard to the latter we hold to our old rule of employing for nurses only women of character and respectable position. They are more responsible than others, and a person cannot know too much for a nurse. It is a very serious position. We have one large ward, or rather building, devoted to women and children. The children are generally well, being taken in as accompaniments to their mammas; there are nineteen pickanninies in this ward. Ask mother if she would like one. Some are very pretty; I can have as many as I want. The men are trying hard to learn to read

and write, though the latter accomplishment is confined to few. One woman came this morning bringing her baby; it had a harelip and I have asked Dr. Russell to operate upon it to-morrow morning. He says he will. I suppose I shall assist. I wonder what I shall do next. I asked the mother's permission, telling her the baby would look as pretty as she did! She looked pleased, and consented. She is quite good looking. We are whitewashing, and expect that will check some of the diseases; it also makes everything look nice and clean.

LETTER XXXVII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
March 18.

MY DEAR MOTHER, — I have been wishing to write to you, but have not had time; I am very busy. To-day I was busy from the time I got up till after seven to-night. I should be busy in the evening too, but Dr. Russell has forbidden my making night rounds while the evenings are so chilly; he is afraid I shall have pneumonia if I am exposed to night air, in addition to being over the sick so much. I think the men are mending, though we still have several deaths every week. This pneumonia makes sad work among the colored people; they cannot resist it as well as the whites. It is just a year since I was so sick at Mrs. Chauvenet's; now I am well. I hope I shall do what

is right. I do not think I am very wise. Mr. Yeatman was here this afternoon, and I went over the hospital with him and Dr. Russell. We have many sick here now. The blacks are attending school; there are sixty-five scholars in the chapel. I went the other morning to hear them sing, they sang of the other life and its peace; it was very touching. Truly this other life is the all in all. There is an old Methodist hymn "Let Jesus find us waiting on the shore;" a sick girl I was taking care of in the Boston Hospital sang it to me when she was half unconscious. I hope I shall be "waiting on the shore." I have very much the same duties here that I had last summer. I am going to try and profit by what I learnt then, to act more wisely now; I think it is time that every year of my life should be spent a little better than the one that went before it; I surely have had teaching enough to learn to trust. I have been busy this afternoon in taking down the names and dates of entrance of our colored nurses; it was a work of time to get hold of all the data. We have ten now, and shall have more. I think the colored people very interesting. They are kindly and warm-hearted. I amused the Doctor very much by announcing the arrival of another little black baby yesterday morning. There have been so many of them in that ward that the Doctor has named it the "Recruiting Infantry Station." The grass here is growing green notwithstanding the cold. A month more will make a great difference here, the trees will be coming out then. One of my nurses, who

came up from Memphis, says the spring flowers are in bloom there. I hope you and father are well. You must pray for me and that will help me. I do for you. Good-night.

LETTER XXXVIII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
March 21.

DARLING MOTHER, — I felt a little lonely to-night, so thought I would write a line to you. I do not go out evenings on account of pneumonia; the Doctor is afraid of my having it. I get very tired in the day-time and am glad to rest when night comes. Is there any news with you? Do tell me how your wrist is, and how you and father are generally. I feel already as if I had drifted far off away from you all. I work over our poor colored soldiers, and they are so grateful for our care. They are as pleasant to take care of as white soldiers, and the wards are as nice, both with regard to comfort and order. We have water enough, the Mississippi has not yet given out, and the reservoir has been cleaned. We have a new arrangement here now; the great amphitheatre is to be what is called a general hospital, that is a hospital that takes in any patients that the military government sends. The outside wards, or buildings, are mostly for the post hospital; that is, they only take the soldiers from the adja-

cent military post of Benton Barracks. The general hospital is to be entirely for colored soldiers. It is to be the colored hospital; we shall probably have colored soldiers from down the river. There are over seventy thousand colored soldiers in the Western army. There is a great interest excited here with regard to their care and treatment. Some of the most influential men at the West are taking up the matter. This hospital is doing a great work, not merely by taking care of their bodies, but by bringing around them noble, devoted men and women who give the blacks the place which freedmen should have, and treat them rightly and make others treat them rightly. There is too much of a feeling among many here that they must be treated like inferior beings; they are only inferior from neglect, that is, in many respects; I hope I shall see my way clear to do my duty by them and all. If you have any thoughts about it in any way, let me have them, for you always help me.

LETTER XXXIX.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
April 4.

DEAR MOTHER, — I received letters from grandmother and Kittie on Saturday; they were very kind to write, Kittie's letter I especially appreciated, it must have taxed her eyes; she writes very entertaining

letters. She does not speak of having received my letter; now I wrote to her, to Chauncy and Carrie; have they got the letters? I should be pleased to know. I am tired and have a stiff neck, — growing rheumatic in my old age; Dr. Russell gave me some liniment to rub on it.

I am busy, and hope I am of use. The colored men have a hospital of their own now; the whole amphitheatre is turned into a general hospital for colored men, soldiers. But you have no idea of the opposition it excites among the Copperheads. If you speak of treating the colored people kindly in a general way, as you speak of your cats and dogs, they have no objection; but if you carry out before their eyes the fact of their being *freedmen*, by treating them on an equality, there is no end of the opposition. There are, in the city of St. Louis, a number of intelligent colored women, — ladies, in fact, many of them, well educated and wealthy; lady-like in manners and conversation. Now, mother, would you believe it? till very lately if one of these women got into a street-car she must not sit down inside, but *stand* on the platform among men who would and often do treat them rudely. The only exception made is this; these colored women have got up a colored Union Society among themselves; it has been in operation about six months. There has existed in St. Louis, a Society for the colored among the white ladies since the beginning of the war. These ladies visit the hospital constantly, taking comforts to the sick. The colored ladies wished the right of visiting

their soldiers in this hospital, and they have at last obtained the privilege of riding *in* the cars on *one* day in the week, viz. Saturday. Some of them coming out a week ago were deliberately insulted by a white lady who was coming out to visit our soldiers. This is the state of things here.

Efforts are being made by every friend of the freedman to give them their rights. Dr. Russell has been fighting for it all winter; he has gained a great deal for them, but it has awakened a spirit of opposition that I had no conception of. It is not to be given up, however. Mr. Yeatman, B. Gratz Brown, Senator from St. Louis, Dr. Eliot, Stanton at Washington, all have hold of this thing, all trying more or less to have it righted. The names I have mentioned are but a few of those who are working for this cause. We have a great deal to do. I hope that the colored people will have an equal right to all public conveyances soon; I had quite an interesting conversation with a Lieut-Colonel Clendennan this afternoon about it. He is a firm Abolitionist, his men (colored) are stationed at the barracks close by; when he comes out in the cars he always insists that the colored soldiers shall ride as well as the white men. He told me many things which interested me very much; he is very handsome, and his fine face lighted up as he talked of the poor people he was working with and for. He told me an amusing anecdote of a Confederate damsel who wished to pass out of the way of those horrid Yankees; she was passed through our lines some forty miles to Vicksburg.

It was during the siege. On getting in, she told the commandant she wished to go to St. Charles. Why, that was in possession of Colonel So-and-so, with a few thousand Yankees, and so on at every place she named. At last she exclaimed, "Where can I go to be out of the way of the Yankees?" "Go to the devil! Madam!" I am glad some of the Confederates have a realizing sense of their condition. One of my prayers is that we may all be united again, in peace and good-will.

LETTER XL.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
April 9.

IN my last letter I gave you an account of the colored ladies' Union Aid Society. This afternoon, one of the leading members came to see me. She is a well educated and intelligent woman; her occupation that of a hair-dresser; she is married, and she and her husband are respectable honest people. Her name is Lee. She and her friends are trying to do all they can for their brethren. They visit them, teach them to read, read to them, and comfort them in many ways. I think, mother, that the work of this time is something like that of the early Christians among the poor and lowly. You have hardly an idea in Massachusetts of the work there is to be done. I used to think the statements of abolitionists extreme, and that their views were sometimes

irrational; now I wonder that people acquainted with the facts can keep any bounds at all. I heard things to-day that would make your blood run cold. And this place is the very centre of such opinions; the very hot-bed for them. And I do believe that is one reason that this hospital for colored soldiers has been permitted to be established in their midst; for it is doing more than taking care of their bodies; it is bringing to the surface facts, and establishing precedents face to face with the enemy. It is storming the citadel. When I look upon this great amphitheatre, dropped down in the midst of all this, and close by a city, the centre of so much of this Western world, I think there is no place where it could be put, where it would come more in contact with the forces against it than here. I hope you will some time see this place.

Mr. Yeatman told me that at present he did not need more teachers; as for nurses we must employ first those already in the service of the Sanitary Commission who have approved themselves, or those whom Miss Dix sends out. There is the objection to sending East for nurses, that it is a long way, and I should not like to be responsible for any one whom I had not known as a tried nurse. The objections to it are obvious; if we were close by her home it would not be so hard for her to come and try.

I have had a stiff neck and pain of a rheumatic kind in my shoulder; the Doctor gave me some liniment to rub on; it did me good. Dr. Russell has also moved me into a larger and pleasanter room where I have good air and am comfortable.

I suppose the green buds are bursting on the trees and the grass growing greener and thicker. I should like to go to some beautiful country and enjoy myself out doors like a pussy cat or squirrel; I do love the country. It will be one year next Friday since I came to this hospital to stay. How much I have gone through since then! I hope to do right wherever I may be. I have had a very bad cough, but am nearly well now and have a good appetite. I have all I need, I suppose. When I have all I can get I like to think so.

LETTER XLI.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
May 7.

DEAR MOTHER, — We are having very warm weather; too hot to be absolutely pleasant, but the trees are beginning to be beautiful, and the grass is lovely, — such a beautiful green! Our sick here are, for the most part, getting well; this weather is doing them good; the coughs are leaving them, and appetites fast coming to them. One of my nurses is just getting over the measles, and another down with erysipelas, very sick; I feel anxious about her. I wonder what you are all doing at home. I am afraid there will be heavy work here. Down by the river, as well as in the Southern States, our news is not good. Three years since Sumter surrendered! But we have done much

in that time; and now, I hope, the end is a little nearer. I do not want to give up working among the soldiers while the war lasts; it is pleasant to help if it is ever so little. And I shall not be of any particular use to anybody when the war is over, for all I am good for is to nurse, and tie up compound fractures. I am glad I am good for something. To-morrow is Sunday; I shall think of you all. I enclose a photograph of a slave woman. Her hair is the color of Kittie's, only brighter brown; her complexion Saxon, so much so that, if she were in a room with white persons, you would not know she was not white also. She is probably octoroon. She is prettier than her picture, she has such a beautiful complexion. She has been a slave till now. I shall have some queer things to tell you that I do not dare put on paper. I have a pretty bouquet on my table that one of my nurses sent me. Flowers are late this year. But we shall all soon be where the flowers are never late and the spring-time never blighted. I suppose you are busy getting ready for summer. I hope you are comfortably arranged now. I wish I could write you an entertaining letter, but I have so few ideas, and I feel dull and stupid. My sick men care for me, and their faces brighten when I go to them; I am glad there are some people in the world happier for my having lived in it.

LETTER XLII.

BENTON BARRACKS HOSPITAL,
May 12.

DEAR KITTIE,— I thought you would like to hear from me. I am going on in my usual routine among my sick. I think you would be interested in our colored boys, they are trying hard to learn to read and to write; I tell them I am very glad, the more they know the more of men they will be; yes, they say, they know that; but it pleases them to have it said to them. They are quite a religious set, and on Sunday, those who can read, are quite diligent over their Bibles. The other Sunday I took my Book of Psalms into one of the wards and read to those who were sick in bed; I read those comforting promises, and then told them these words were for all of us, and how near the Lord was to them; that when they were off in camp again, or fighting for the old flag, he was close by ready to help them whenever they asked Him. It was a very pleasant thought to them. I told them also how He loved them. The poor souls have not had much love shown them in this life and it is very pleasant to them to think of such love being all ready for them, now and hereafter. The colored female nurses are improving and are of much use. They have a table to themselves, and this morning I was quite amused to find a wail coming up because they did not have corn bread and *fried* meat; the frying pan and corn bread are neces-

saries of life to the negroes. I reported to Dr. Russell who desired me to draw up a bill of fare in accordance with their peculiar dietary views and have it carried out in their kitchen. I have done so and hope they will be satisfied and I shall not be informed again they have "nothing fit to eat," because they have flour bread and boiled beef. I was visiting the patients this morning and came to quite a forlorn specimen. Did he want anything? "Yes, an apple." I asked the nurse if the Doctor let him eat apples; "Yes, and he has one now," and turning down the bed clothes there was an apple half eaten in his hand. The rogue had got one out of the nurse and meant to get another out of me. We had a good laugh over him, in which he could not help joining. One man here, a white man, wants raw onions every day, and I have been trying hard to supply him. They are mostly out of the market now. The other day, in his gratitude, he told me that when he got some *pickled* peaches he meant to give me one. If there is anything I abhor it is a pickled peach, but I did not tell him so.

On May 18 there was in St. Louis, a Fair for the benefit of the Sanitary Commission. My daughter speaks of it as magnificent; as the finest she ever saw; and as very successful pecunarily. In several of her letters she gives many details of it, some of which might be amusing, but I do not see that they differ from the accounts

of other large Fairs, and I do not insert them here.

About this time the character of the Benton Barracks Hospital began to change. It soon became rather a house of refuge for refugees, than a hospital for sick and wounded soldiers. Under date of June 2, she says.

LETTER XLIII.

We are having changes here; there are not many sick and there is now a new order from General Sherman to the effect that no more sick or wounded are to be carried out of his department. That will prevent our filling up here, I suppose. We have about an even number of black and white patients; this week Mr. Forman brought out a number of refugees and put them into a large building called Ward 6. The Home in the city was overflowing; it is a small inconvenient house; and at one time over thirty children were there together, besides grown people. I do not know how many more they will send out. I should not wonder if this became a refugees' home; but I do not know what they will turn us into next. I only hope it will be something good. I am busy; I look after black soldiers, and white soldiers, and we are now desired to take charge of sick contrabands. The changing the seat of war has removed the necessity of so many hospitals here, and some are closing

up. When the white patients get well there will hardly be any more, as the troops are all ordered away from here; nearly all have gone, and the city will be for the most part guarded by the hundred day men, the home guard of old men, and some few others. I hope the city will not be placed in danger again, but the guerillas are very active still, popping up when least expected. I do not see one day ahead, but I believe it will come right to all who try to do their duty. I enjoyed the Fair very much; it was a very pleasant place. As it is only open in the evenings I shall not probably go in again; I saw it once in the evening, it was splendid, the gas lighted it very well.

In the latter part of June, Emily became quite ill, and Dr. Russell for some days wrote her letters at her dictation, she being unable to write. The first letter which the Doctor wrote was dated June 22, the last July 3. All of them are cheerful and hopeful, although it is apparent, from the remarks which the Doctor appended, that she was at one time quite ill. Here are extracts from some of them.

LETTER XLIV.

Benton Barracks, June 22, 1864.

Dear Mother, — Do not be alarmed at Dr. Russell's writing this; I am suffering from an attack of ill-

ness and the Doctor says I must not do anything but keep still and get well. I hope to be at my work again in a few days. I have been confined to my room for three days, but hope to be out soon, as there is a great deal that demands my attention. I will write every day and let you know how I am, I have a most excellent colored woman to take care of me.

[There follows a postscript from the Doctor saying he sees nothing alarming in her symptoms.]

LETTER XLV.

Benton Barracks, June 23.

Dear Mother, — I had a pretty good night and feel a little better this morning. I am obliged to keep very quiet; it hurts me to sit up to write, so the Doctor is writing for me. I should think you and my sister might write a little more. I'll stop writing if you don't. I am flat on my back, and have time to be irate. I shall write again to-morrow and expect I shall be able to say I am a good deal better.

N.B. — I consider Miss Emily better, and believe she is doing well and will soon be about again. She is in excellent spirits, but dislikes to give up her work.

I. R.

LETTER XLVI.

BENTON BARRACKS, June 27.

DEAR MOTHER, — I am doing very well ; Doctor says I may write the next time but prefers I should not to-day. I am very sorry to be sick. I want to be at my work again. I am well cared for. Everybody is kind to me. Mr. Yeatman's family come and inquire after me often and send me goodies. Mr. Yeatman has sent me some nice things to-day which have done me good. I expect some wine jelly and butter-milk to-night.

[Then, in her own hand.]

Dr. Russell nurses me splendidly but refuses to say so.

LETTER XLVII.

BENTON BARRACKS, June 28.

DEAR MOTHER, — I had my best night last night, and I am a little more comfortable to-day ; the wine jelly and butter-milk from Mr. Yeatman's came this morning. I relish my buttermilk very much ; my disease is much less ; but I am still weak and require to keep very quiet ; I have the best of care and every thing I need. Love to all.

LETTER XLVIII.

BENTON BARRACKS, June 30.

DEAR MOTHER, — I have not gained much for two days, but hope to take a start again soon in the right direction. My disease is diminishing, but I am quite weak and am obliged to keep very quiet. I am well provided for and have everything I need. Everybody is kind and good to me.

P.S. — Emily on the whole is doing well. The weather is very warm and her progress is slow; she is patient and happy.

I. R.

LETTER XLIX.

BENTON BARRACKS, July 2.

DEAR MOTHER, — I am doing first rate and getting well fast. My greatest difficulty is weakness, but I trust father's Italian wine, eggs and buttermilk will give me strength. There is no epidemic dysentery in the hospital; the sickness in the hospital except among the refugees from Arkansas is much less than usual. I brought on the attack, probably, by hard work among the miserable refugees, the most worthless and ignorant set of human beings I ever saw, — but they are human and must be cared for. There are some very nice ex-

ceptions and many interesting children among them, however. Mr. Yeatman thinks tea will be good for me and has sent me some very exquisite black tea, sent to him from China; also a wonderful teakettle, containing a kerosene lamp and boiler, and sundry other fixtures; also teapot, teacup and saucer of white china. I am very weak but hope to get well soon; I have just got your letter. I hope you have some flowers; I have a sweet bouquet on my table.

[Then the Doctor says.]

P.S. — I can assure you that Emily is doing first-rate and that you can feel confident of her speedy recovery. Her illness makes her uncomfortable; it is hard to bear and attended with much exhausting pain. Emily has borne her sickness bravely; has been happy and contented. Allow me also to say that I am under many obligations to her and esteem her very much.

I. R.

LETTER L.

Benton Barracks, July 3.

Dear Mother, — I am happy to inform you that I continue to gain. This afternoon the Doctor came over and made me some tea in the wonderful teapot. I must say my opinion of tea remains unchanged. So I made the Doctor drink it up. The teakettle will be

useful for many purposes. There is no need of your coming out to me, and I am afraid the climate would make you sick. I enclose a letter that may interest you, it is from a woman whose only son died here. She came and took care of him during his last days.

She recovered from this attack and resumed her usual duties. The change of the Institution at Benton Barracks from a hospital for sick and wounded soldiers to a home for "contrabands" and refugees became more complete. Most of the nurses with whom she had been associated left the hospital, and Dr. Russell proposed to leave it. As the season advanced, the malarial fever which had attacked her on her coming back from Vicksburg returned with much severity. She recovered sufficiently to come home, but was exceedingly feeble and exhausted when she reached Cambridge in August, 1864. Her health and strength were not restored until winter; and then she labored in such ways as she could for the freedmen and refugees; of this however I can add nothing to the account already quoted from "Women's Work in the War." She then began her efforts for the establishment of a hospital in Cambridge. The extracts I make from the reports which she printed will tell her own story of this matter.

Extract from the Report of the Cambridge Hospital, 1870–71.

From the time of the first settlement of Cambridge until the year 1865, there was no Hospital for this city, unless the Almshouse can be called such. There has been for a long time a growing need of such an institution. The hospitals of Boston had not room for all, or a large number, of the sick poor of Cambridge. Nor was it right that, with our means and advantages, we should be dependent upon another city for the care of our own citizens. It therefore seemed necessary that we should have a suitable Hospital of our own, where the sick and disabled poor of Cambridge could be cared for.

In the fall of 1865, a number of the citizens of Cambridge made me donations for the purpose of commencing such an institution. The next step was to procure a house. I did not succeed in finding one I could have until the spring of 1867. I then rented for one year a small house, which I opened as a Hospital in May. When I opened the Hospital, I had not sufficient means to carry it through one year; but I had faith that all needful wants would be supplied, and they were. I was sustained through the year, and closed with sufficient funds to pay my rent for another year, and also a small sum to begin again upon.

I was obliged to suspend at the end of the first year, the owner wishing to make another disposition

of the house. That first year was one of success, — so much so, that I felt encouraged to reopen the Hospital as soon as I could procure a house. I was obliged to wait until the fall of 1869 before I could find a suitable house, and a landlord willing to lease me one for such a purpose. In the mean time a Fair had been held, which added materially to our funds. Assistance also came in from other sources.

In December, 1869, I reopened the Hospital on Prospect Street, in a convenient house on the corner of Prospect and Hampshire Streets, where we have remained until this time. During these two years we have received one hundred and twenty-two patients, — forty the first year, eighty-two the second, — many of them very serious cases, and several of long duration. Out of this number we had four deaths : the others either recovered entirely or were very materially benefited. We have also treated a number of out-patients in the Dispensary. The patients are mostly persons of small means, or in very moderate circumstances, — hard-working, industrious women, who earn their own support, and, when they have families, supplying either wholly or in part their needs also ; but, when sick or disabled, they can neither support themselves, nor be properly cared for in their homes.

Others are domestics, who cannot conveniently be taken care of in their places, and usually have no home to go to, nor means to pay for their board and medical care and nursing. We have had several such at the Hospital, and sent them out well and able to take care of themselves again.

Another and very interesting class are children. Some of these can be soon restored; but many others require long care and very skilful medical treatment before they can be cured, or helped as far as their cases will admit. All who have seen suffering children know how hard it is for them to bear their ailments, even with all the alleviations which money and care can give. It is far more hard for them when they have but few, if any, of the comforts an invalid needs; and but little care, and that little unskilful and irregular. Few, except physicians, know how many of these cases there are.

The surgical and medical treatment has been under the daily direction of Dr. Charles E. Vaughan and Dr. J. T. G. Nichols, who have visited the Hospital in alternate months since its commencement, giving us their invaluable aid most generously and kindly; thus granting freely to the poorest patient all the skill the richest could provide.

In the first year of our work, Dr. S. Cabot of Boston, very kindly gave us his valuable advice. Since then, Dr. Richard M. Hodges, of Boston, has several times assisted as consulting and operating surgeon. We are much indebted to Dr. M. Wyman for his advice and assistance, and also to Dr. C. Bullock for very valuable dental services. Other physicians, also have most generously offered their aid.

With regard to our means of support, we have no fund from which to draw. Our only maintenance has been the funds coming in from time to time, a small

part of which has been the moderate amount paid by patients who are able to pay for the care and treatment they receive. We have sometimes been very poor, — so poor, that twice we almost stopped. Then aid has come at the eleventh hour, and we have been enabled to go on with our work. In the fall of 1870, the city government came generously to our aid by appropriating $750 for the rent of the house we occupy. They showed us the same kindness last fall: thus our rent for this year is secured.

At the same time, the Hospital took a very important step onward. A number of the gentlemen of Cambridge consented to act as Trustees for the institution, and, forming themselves into a Board of Directors, obtained from the Legislature of Massachusetts an Act of Incorporation to the Cambridge Hospital; and the same has been duly organized under the said Act.

The Hospital was first opened as a Hospital for Women and Children, taking in no male patient over six years of age; but, now that its usefulness has steadily increased, it is hoped that it will be the beginning of a General Hospital for the City of Cambridge, large enough and rich enough to take in all of either sex who can be benefited by hospital treatment. . . .

This is a good work that has come upon us, — caring for the sick and disabled; helping "those we shall have with us always," — helping them not only in the body, but sometimes, also, receiving the great privilege of helping them in a higher way, and one that will be a help in the great future which is coming to us all.

Emily E. Parsons.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN THE YEAR ONE THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED AND SIXTY-NINE.

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE CAMBRIDGE HOSPITAL.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same as follows:—

SECT. 1. Isaac Livermore, Sumner R. Mason, W. W. Wellington, Kinsley Twining, Benjamin Tilton, Alexander McKenzie, Henry B. Walcott, their associates and successors, are hereby made a corporation, by the name of the CAMBRIDGE HOSPITAL, for the purpose of maintaining a Hospital in the City of Cambridge, for sick and disabled persons; with all the powers and privileges, and subject to all the duties, restrictions, and liabilities set forth in the general laws which now or may hereafter be in force relating to such corporations; and, for the purpose aforesaid, said corporation may hold real and personal property to an amount not exceeding one hundred and fifty thousand dollars.

SECT. 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

House of Representatives, Feb. 9, 1871.
Passed to be enacted.

HARVEY JEWELL, *Speaker.*

This Hospital continued open, and under her charge until May 1872. She lived in it, making short calls at her home occasionally, but acting always as matron and nurse at the Hospital with such assistance as the funds provided enabled her to have.

When the Hospital was discontinued she received from a Committee of the Trustees, the following letter.

CAMBRIDGEPORT, May 20, 1872.

MISS EMILY E. PARSONS: DEAR MADAM, — The undersigned, in behalf of the Cambridge Hospital Corporation, in closing their official connection with you, desire to express their high appreciation of your valuable services in the establishment and management of this institution.

In their judgment, the Hospital, during its brief existence, has done great good in restoring the health, or adding to the comfort of many, who without its benefits, might have suffered from poverty or neglect. They feel that whatever good has been done is mainly owing to your self-sacrificing labors and untiring devotion; they honor alike your *faith* and your *works*. They deeply regret the necessity, which compels them to close the doors of the Hospital, and thus to deprive the City, for a time at least, of the benefit of your self-imposed work of philanthropy and charity.

With sincere thanks for what you have accomplished, and with pleasant recollections of their official and personal intercourse with you, the undersigned would subscribe themselves very truly yours.

ISAAC LIVERMORE,
W. W. WELLINGTON,
W. A. BULLARD,
Committee in behalf of Trustees.

The experiment made the need and usefulness of such a Hospital certain; the funds gradually increased; and during her last illness, not long before her death, but while she was still able to understand the statement, and express her thankfulness, I had the pleasure of reading to her a paragraph from the Boston Daily Advertiser, to the effect, that efforts were soon to be made to increase the funds of the Cambridge Hospital, "originally instituted by Miss Emily E. Parsons," from $17,000, their present amount, to $100,000, which would be sufficient to place it upon a permanent foundation.

THEOPHILUS PARSONS.

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